

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout

The daily sales e-newsletters from 42 **MIGHTY** Sales Reps

January 2009 – July 2010

A present for the **MIGHTY** client team

Troy Forrest

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The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

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The Beach Run

The first step into your **MIGHTY** 2009...

Welcome to “the newsletter formerly known as BIG PICTURE details”!

The day before NYE, I spent 2 hours running (err, shuffling) the beach from Goolwa to Port Elliot. About 13km, I could see the obelisk of Elliot ahead where I'd meet the family for lunch.

The beach constantly changed - soft, firm, shell-covered and, when I wasn't watching, underwater. Had my eyes down to decide where each footstep should go. But kept looking up to ensure the obelisk hadn't disappeared. Now and then I remembered to glance out to sea, breathe in and remind myself how good this place is.

Finished a bit fried with sore feet (but got my fish'n'chip lunch & a bucketful of personal satisfaction).

This year, through eclectic stories, book reviews, fresh perspectives and gauntlets thrown at your feet, I'm aiming to help you cross the sand;

- Define & remember the business outcomes most important to you
- Focus on processes you need to get there
- Galvanise habits & disciplines to keep you moving, and
- Lift your eyes to remember to **enjoy** what you're doing!

Welcome to your daily sales beach run. Anyone can run on sand. But to make it *further, faster, easier* and *more enjoyable*.... going to try and help you!

See you tomorrow!

Troy Forrest

42 MIGHTY Sales Reps

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

RPA's finest

"One never knows what new discoveries are around the corner,
and in the meantime, I have a lot of living (& learning) to do."

Professor Chris O'Brien

2 years ago, head & neck cancer surgeon (& star of TV's *RPA*) Chris O'Brien was diagnosed with a brain tumor that will most likely take his life.

In his book *Never say die*, Professor O'Brien talks about his career path, disease and the ongoing fight. 3 pearls from his story;

- **Appreciate all specialties, master just one** - spending years trying all areas of medicine, O'Brien gradually narrowed focus to commit to 1 niche area (and became exceptional at it).
- **Belief in a multidisciplinary approach** - surgeons, physicians, nurses, allied health staff - no single group 'owns cancer', so he created forums for all to contribute to helping each patient.
- **Make a choice** - after getting a poor prognosis, O'Brien spoke to a cancer specialist who said "*that's all bullsh*t - patients decide how long they'll live, not doctors.*"

Today's dune challenge...

- ... learn 1 new thing about a client & 1 thing to aid *your* professional performance
- ... find 1 other person that can help your client - invite them into your team
- ... choose to defy economic doom & gloom - you decide your '09 result today

The ocean glance...

"*Everything comes at a cost.*" Prof O'Brien believes his busy, complicated life contributed to a less effective immune system. His philosophy now - "*Value each day as a gift to be enjoyed & shared*".

Never say die, C O'Brien, Harper Collins, Sydney, 2008.

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Orstraylia.

"It is absurd, and yet absurdly entertaining."

Philip French's review in *The Observer*

Baz Luhrmann's epic *Australia* divides audiences and critics. Straw-polling friends who've seen it, here's some views;

- **It unashamedly targets its market** - America - playing on ocker stereotypes for our US coming-out party.
- **It's not perfect, but it's amazing** - you're missing the point if you wanted historical accuracy or thespian dialogue... it's designed as an overwhelming feast for the senses.
- **It's set up for multiple revenue streams** - with the Australian tourism commission on board, they'll eke some coin out of this one.

That, and Hugh Jackman with his shirt off - got my wife...

Today's dune challenge...

- ... crisply and clearly define your perfect customer - who is a perfect fit for you?
- ... decide what you are best at - the 1 thing to overcome your drawbacks
- ... find at least 2 benefits to every task you'll perform today - leverage your work

The ocean glance...

Hugh said on *Oprah* he had a bucketload of fun making this movie. Do customers have a sense of how much you love what *you* do?

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

Partnerships

"It's surprising what you can accomplish,
if you don't care who gets the credit"

Abraham Lincoln

Anne Bruce's *How to motivate every employee* offers managers advice on making employees feel more like business partners.

- **Encourage entrepreneurial thinking** - promote creativity, allow others to make important decisions
- **Explain how the business is run** - help them understand how they fit the bigger picture and the difference their performance makes to overall results
- **Show them they own the business** - giving people greater control of their work increases personal accountability for results

Today's dune challenge...

- ... work with a client or colleague on a creative sales solution or service initiative
- ... tell a customer how important their business is & how grateful you are for it
- ... train a customer to help themselves - increase their control over their results

The ocean glance...

The author's takehome - "*when people feel ownership of something, they're highly motivated to look out for it.*" In 2009, turn 'customers' into 'partners'!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

How to motivate every employee, A Bruce, McGraw Hill, New York 2006.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Not the sharpest knife.

"It's fairly unusual that we see something that specifically stupid."

FBI spokesman Rob Rice

In December, Mr Thomas Infante went into a Chicago bank and gave the teller a piece of paper saying 'Give your cash or I'll shoot'. He was handed \$400 and ran away, leaving his note behind.

Trouble was, the note was written on back of one of his torn payslips. The other half of the payslip, with his address on it, was found outside the bank doors. They arrested him.

Perhaps needed a little more forward planning & double-checking...

Today's dune challenge...

... plan your next meeting in advance - agenda, desired outcomes & questions to ask
... double-check your next piece of correspondence - t's crossed & i's dotted?

The ocean glance...

If you're going to rob a bank, at least use someone else's payslip...

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

Source - www.theage.com.au.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Big farm stuff

"Our job is to break it before the customer sees it.
If we don't break it here, they won't break it on the farm."

John Deere Production Supervisor

Watched the super-blokey *Megafactories* (grunt) on National Geographic channel the other night. They profiled the John Deere Combine Harvester factory in Illinois.

Every week, one harvester is pulled off the line and subjected to a 5-day, 265-point quality audit. If any of the 17,000 parts turn up loose or measure incorrectly, the engineer reports to the team & they collectively decide how to prevent it happening again. They also run a prototype harvester on a 'worst terrain ever' simulator 24/7 to pick up problems before they hit mass production.

For a piece of equipment worth more than most farmers' houses, they are religious about pre-testing.

Today's dune challenge...

Can you test a sales question or benefit statement on a colleague before a client call?
Is there a 'call gone bad' you can debrief with a team-mate & brainstorm improvements?

The ocean glance...

John Deere brings new harvester purchasers to the factory to view their new baby, gives them a gold key and photographs them as they start their machine for the first time. Can you make a bit of a fuss of *your* new customers?

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Churn through the overs

Blink & you'll miss it.

(Only cricket email of the summer, promise... :-) In the 20-20 game between Australia and South Africa on Sunday, David Hussey bowled 4 overs for the victorious Australians.

He bowled well, but what impressed commentators was how *fast* he got through each over. He didn't give the batsmen any time to stop & think about their next shot. As soon as they looked up, a new ball was heading towards them. Before the tourists knew it, Hussey'd bowled 24 balls and the required run rate had become unachievable.

'twill go fast, 2009.... keeping an eye on each sales day to keep the run rate up?

Today's dune challenge...

Got a system to track your activities, disciplines & results *every sales day*?
Can you set yourself a monthly run rate, weekly target list or daily discipline reminder?

The ocean glance...

About 240 working days to enjoy, excel in and use wisely to achieve your professional goals for 2009. Leave it in the lap of the Gods, or work a system to help you keep your eye on the ball!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Customers at a BBQ

"What I like about you...."

The Romantics

Picture a summer Sunday afternoon in the backyard of a top customer. Coopers Pale Ale and Jacobs Creek flowing; lots of chinwagging over coleslaw & chops.

A potential client you've just started seeing goes up to your customer and says "*Hey, I met Troy the other day. First impressions were good - how do you rate them?*". And your client says "*Yeah, I've been dealing with Troy for a while. Troy is*"

What are the next 3 words you'd like to hear from your client's mouth?

Today's dune challenge...

What 3 words would you like your customers consistently saying about you?
Before a client call today, can you plan an action to start them saying the words?

The ocean glance...

Because *you* get to define these backyard BBQ words, they'll be things you are passionate about. The actions you then take to get customers saying them? Highly customer focused. Win-win... just got to decide what they'll be!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Studying competitors

"Make no enemies with whom you differ on petty reasons.

Instead, cultivate mighty opposites - people with whom you will fight to the end over fundamental convictions.

That fight will be good for you and your opponent."

Thomas Watson Jr., IBM

Guy Kawasaki's *How to drive your competition crazy* stresses the importance of knowing all about the people trying to cut your lunch.

Investing time researching competitors - patronising their premises, using their products & services, (ethically) asking their customers about them, studying them - is a highly customer-focused approach. Why?

- **You'll learn where the gaps are** - the niches you might help customers fill
- **You'll learn from the good stuff** - flatter them by imitating - and improving on - the competitive advantages they offer clients
- **You'll be able to do the right thing by customers** - if you can't help someone, tell them about a competitor that can... It'll come back to you!

Today's dune challenge...

Can you start a regular diary appointment this week - 'Competitor analysis'?
Crystal clear about differences (+ and -) between you and your mightiest opposite?

The ocean glance...

"A good enemy forces you to improve your business." Your approach isn't perfect and neither is theirs - but can always learn something from them!

How to drive your competition crazy, G Kawasaki, Hyperion 1986.

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

I dare ya

"I'm tired of all the '*Notes-is-crap, Microsoft-is-best*' yadah yadah.

So I'm putting my money where my mouth is."

Andy Steven, Uptime 100

Andy runs a small IT network administration business. He's passionate about Lotus Notes - a product with chequered history, but he believes is now pretty schmick.

To challenge staid mindsets, he's opened a competition to Adelaide IT people - build a particular tool using only Microsoft products while Andy does the same with only Lotus Notes. The one that can beat him, he'll give an ipod touch. He's also putting on beer and pizza for the 'sad IT people' that want to come watch.

He doesn't know if it will work, but free beer and challenging IT people's cleverness? Red rag to bulls!

Today's dune challenge...

So confident you'd give away an ipod to anyone who could better *your* sales service?

Is there a 'dare-you-to-try-it-and-not-love-it' approach that might fit *your* customers?

The ocean glance...

Even if he loses an ipod, his business wins. Unshakeable belief backed by a creative way of arousing client interest... pretty good sales mix!

(PS If you know an IT person that likes free beer, send them to www.uptime100.com.au.)

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Rat proofing

"Hopefully, the rat is now chewing on something tastier,
and less expensive to repair!"

Telstra spokesperson

One of Australia's biggest tissue & toilet paper factories, Kimberly Clark's Millicent Mill, lost phone communications for several days last week.

700 employees had to use mobile phones while Telstra technicians flew from Adelaide to investigate. They found a faulty cable supplying the mill and fixed it, only to have it die again the next day. Fresh inspection found teeth marks in the fibre-optics.

As 6 technicians fixed the cable (again), a rat ran out of the conduit.

Band-aid solutions versus identifying & treating the cause.

Today's dune challenge...

When a client explains a problem, can you dig deeper to accurately diagnose?

Will your solution replace damaged cable and rat-proof against future problems?

The ocean glance...

"Old timers may recall another rat that blew up a switchboard & shut the mill for 2 days in 1944." The smallest (furriest) issues can bring down the factory - helps to know where the rats can get into your sales offering!

Hungry rat silences mill's communications, 13/1/09, J Smith, The South East Times.

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The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Ockham's Razor

"Ockham's razor - the simplest explanation is that someone scr*wed up."

Dr Greg House, *House*

Ockham's razor is an ABC radio show based on a scientific principle named after William of Ockham, a 12th Century Franciscan Friar.

It says "*All other things being equal, the simplest explanation is the most likely.*" That is, cut away unnecessary assumptions to reveal the simplest answer to a problem.

It's not always right (some things are a little more complicated), but it makes a great starting point. Begin with the simplest, most likely explanation, and work your way from there.

Today's dune challenge...

Facing a sales situation that looks complicated... what's the simplest explanation?

Strip your presentation back to 3 words - why should a customer buy from you?

The ocean glance...

Your results & your enjoyment of work in 2009... depend on the economy, your boss, the team, resolution of back orders, new marketing material, company policies...? Try starting with the simpler answer.... '*depends on you*'.

Lies, deep fries & statistics, Robyn Williams, ABC Books 2007.

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Your daily sales muscle workout...

Ice Hotel

"The beauty, as well as the parts we weren't quite satisfied with, disappear."

Arne Bergh, Ice Hotel creator

Each year in Jukkasjavi, Sweden, a frost-bitten team sculpt the amazing Ice Hotel.

Cut from the pure frozen water of the river Torne, the hotel has ice beds, ice glasses, ice chairs & an ice cinema. A functional masterpiece that lasts the winter... then melts away.

3 Ice Hotel principles;

- **Memorable experiences** - strive to give clients something they've never had
- **Beauty and comfort** - it's one thing to look spectacular, but put reindeer pelts and arctic sleeping bags on the beds to give clients a sound sleep
- **Build anew, but preserve something** - tons of ice are stored in cold rooms over summer to give sculptors a headstart on next season

Today's dune challenge...

Can you define 1 (amazing) experience you'll give a client in 2009 they've never had?
Bells & whistles of your offering aside... will it do the basics & give peace of mind?

The ocean glance...

With 2009 warming up, it's a great time to start something new for clients - higher service levels, innovative sales approaches, loyalty rewards. But you needn't rebuild the whole hotel - reuse the ice that served you well in '08!

Hip hotels, H Ypma, Thames & Hudson 2000.

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Lance

Raise the bar.

Yesterday, I stood near the start line of the Tour Down Under in Hahndorf and watched Lance Armstrong's return.

The Texan is generating Beatles-like excitement in South Australia. He's motivating a lot of people to saddle up in Lycra (even those that shouldn't).

You don't have to be a sports tragic to be inspired by someone that's overcome a disease most have been touched by, who is the greatest-ever at something we can all do.

Pushing yourself to be remarkable - the best - lifts everyone around you.

Today's dune challenge...

Is there something you can excel at - push yourself to be 'world (industry) best' at?

Questioning, listening, proposal-generating, key account managing, technical knowledge... something that will inspire others to follow your lead?

Define it today.

The ocean glance...

Lance stank at school, so he made a choice, and sacrificed, and continually pushed himself to get better at something he loves & naturally does well. In your sales role, what already comes easy that you can take to new level?

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The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Party planning

"I recommend you take care of the minutes,
and the hours will take care of themselves."

Earl of Chesterfield

President Obama and his First Lady attended 10 balls in 5 hours on inauguration night.

So you don't have an FBI detail, army of staff or a few hundred million lying around. Some simple White House tips for sales time managers;

... **plan** - your obligations, your route, your 'nice-to-do-if-time-permit's'

... **prioritise** - who's most important, who gives the most money, who needs you?

... **flex** - hiccups needn't ruin days - go with the flow, then return to the plan

... **smile** - the crowd know's you're busy - they need to know you can handle it

... **habit** - it all begins again tomorrow, so get ready in advance...

Today's dune challenge...

Define one area of your 'time spend' that isn't giving you the ROI you want.

Is there 1 time management tool you've let slide that might help? Try again today.

The ocean glance...

The new President is a gun at motivating people to invest their time to help him help others. Are there team mates, colleagues, networking partners that you can motivate to share your load and help a client?

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Lamb and Vegemite

"Out on the patio, we sit..."

Ganggajang

For the non-down-under readers (and those sad enough to be checking email today), it's Australia day.

Thongs, tongs, coldies, bangers, and let the only men at work be the ones singing *Land down under*. Today is a celebration of all it means to be part of a country we think is pretty bl**dy good. To remember what makes us unique, what we share and how lucky we are.

If we gave your punters a 'My Customer Day', would they have a common reason to celebrate... to reflect on how lucky they are to be in your team?

Today's dune challenge...

Define the common experience *you* want to give every customer - your anthem.

What's the first thing you'll do tomorrow to get a client believing they get it?

The ocean glance...

Take a mo to reflect on & refresh your gathering-speed approach to 2009. It's a customer-focused thing to do - let 'em benefit from the fresh thinking and renewed energy you'll gain from kicking back with family & mates today!

Have a **MIGHTY** Australia day! (now get off your Blackberry!)

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Clients won't fail

Red rags to bulls.

Long way round is a great story about actor Ewan McGregor and his mate Charlie riding their motorbikes around the world.

Seeking bike sponsors for the trip, they narrowed it to BMW and KTM. KTM sent a rep to ask the guys about their plans. After the meeting they phoned back and said *"Sorry, we won't be giving you our bikes. We don't think you'll make it."*

Charlie's response (edited for profanities) was *"How dare they! We'll do it on the BMW's and show them."*

So they did. And BMW bike sales went bananas.

Your dune challenge...

Got a customer disgruntled with a current supplier? Can you ask about & show them how *you* support their goals?

Someone preparing to bypass your fantastic solution for a competitor offering? Smile, wish them the best, and tell them you'd love to try help them in future.

Be supportive of everyone... position yourself to get a call-up!

(PS the guys recently made a sequel - *Long way down*. Guess what they're riding...)

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Likeability

"She likes me for me..."

Blessid Union of Souls

In her article *The secret to likeability*, HR consultant Pam Holloway argues there are 7 common traits to 'likeable people'.

- **Positive attitudes** - maybe not 'high on life', but see problems as opportunities
- **Non-judgmental** - treat everyone with respect & understanding
- **Open** - to suggestions, new ideas, different opinions & approaches
- **Secure** - in their own skin; don't brag or constantly put themselves down
- **Vulnerable** - admit their mistakes; show a sensitive side
- **Get beyond themselves** - it's not all about them; actively ask about others
- **Like me** - we like those who like us; have similar values and experiences

She suggests these are mostly skills that can be developed. If the phrase "*I do business with people I like*" has ever run through your head, maybe worth a go...

Your dune challenge...

Stand in the roomful of mirrors - which one of those do you think you consistently demonstrate? Decide 1 way you'll showcase it to a client today.

Now breathe out - which one are you less than a shining example of? Have a go today - find 1 client you haven't shown this to, and find a way to.

The ocean glance...

Holloway cites a California University study that showed doctors give more time and better treatment to patients that they like. Your sales health depends on being liked!

The secret to likeability, P Holloway, www.aboutus.com, 2006.

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Who knows what'll happen?

"Wonder what happens if we push this button..."

Famous last words

Scientists perform 2 kinds of studies - retrospective analysis & prospective trials.

Retrospective analyses look back at already-achieved results (like past sales numbers or behaviours that generated them) and try drawing a conclusion (*"based on history, if we do more of this & less of that, we can assume we'd get this result."*).

Prospective trials test the unknown - *"We think this might happen, so let's give it a go and observe the results"*. Start with a goal, plan a new approach and execute it to see if it works.

One uses history to assume results; the other builds on history to test them.

Your dune challenge...

Get retrospective about 2008 - what worked really well for you, what did you do that turned into happy customers & sales, and what turned into dung? Learn from the past.

Now, prospectively test a new approach - a new customer forum, client loyalty initiative or different way of opening sales conversations. Build on your knowledge by testing something you're not sure about.

The ocean glance...

It might blow up in your face (though I doubt it). The very least - you learn something (and won't die wondering!) Shed a skin - start planning an unknown sales approach today!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Goldilocks and the 3 Optometrists

Too grumpy... too poorly trained... just (about) right.

2 weeks ago, I bought new glasses (stylish). But they didn't sit right on my crooked head. The shop offers free adjustments, so I've been back 3 times.

The first lady knew her stuff, but was sour and made it clear I was wasting her time. She improved the fit, but not completely (and I didn't want to see her again).

The second lady was lovely - spoke to my kids and asked them about their Xmas. Interested in the things important to me... but no idea how to fix the problem.

Final trip to a sister store - a gentleman who asked lots of questions before trying some fixes. Used the words '*they look pretty good, but it's about how they feel to you*'. Suggested I try the fix for a week, then return for re-tweaking.

Still not quite right, but I'm happy to go back, and to recommend this guy.

Your dune challenge...

Before visiting clients this week, check 2 things. Your *technical competence* -have you got adequate skills & knowledge to help them? If not, plan a step to sharpen it.

Then, *your demeanor* - are you using words to show you're happy to try seeing things through customer spectacles (rather than prejudging with your own?)

The ocean glance...

They still haven't fixed the problem (maybe it's me...). But the chap appears to know what he's doing and seems happy to help. So... will give another go!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Dice rolls

"Any good strategy involves risks.

If you think your strategy is foolproof, the fool may well be you."

Prof. Phil Rozenweig

In his management book *The Halo Effect*, Strategy Professor Rozenweig discusses the elusive search for a single 'secret to business success' formula. (His 175 page answer - 'there isn't one.')

He argues that good strategies and how they're executed play vital roles in individual & company success, but that timing and chance weigh in heavily. He suggests leaders that succeed take calculated risks, conscious that chance is involved.

"But then," he says "*when the die is cast, the best managers act as if chance is irrelevant - persistence & tenacity become everything.*"

Your dune challenge...

Is there a sales or business approach you've been considering that carries risk, but on balance, has an upside worth chancing?

Once you commit, carry out your plan as if it's guaranteed to work. There's a chance it may not, but if you fully invest in your approach, poor execution won't be an excuse.

The ocean glance...

Rozenwieg quotes former US Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin - "*In a world of odds, chances & trade-offs, the only way to refine the probabilities is through greater knowledge & understanding.*"

(In other words - do some homework to know the risks before starting!)

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The Halo Effect, P Rozenweig, Simon & Schuster UK, 2007.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Lamingtons

"Do you care for tea?"

The Mad Hatter

The ladies of the CWA don't get looked to nearly enough for business inspiration...

On a recent *Food Safari* episode, some CWA Kenwood Blender veterans demonstrated how to make the perfect lamingtons. Nannas, pinnys, cut sponge & dessicated coconut. Old school kitchencraft (oh, the aromas...).

With a plate of finished product, they adjourned to the sitting room. One said *"They take a while to make. You then just must make the time if you're going to have a nice afternoon tea to enjoy them."*

Maybe no boardroom meetings to rush off to, but a (tea) leaf in taking time to enjoy your labours.

Your dune challenge...

Is there a client who'd enjoy some time with you to review the progress of your partnership... plan for the year ahead... share their vision... just enjoy a cuppa?

For the business, for the bonding, for the enjoyment.... book it in today.

The ocean glance...

Easy to get bogged down in the machinations of what you do. Challenging to build tea time with the people you do it for. But if it lets you both breathe, think and enjoy the daily process a little more, it's a client-focused activity!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Cushioning the blow

Don't worry, I have a plan!

Our Prime Minister yesterday announced we face a \$115 billion revenue black hole over the next 4 years (and you thought your sales numbers were rough).

Then, following a suitably somber pause, he announced a new \$42 billion stimulus package to get Australians back on the rails and feeling confident (including \$3 billion worth of free ceiling insulation!)

His words - *"We will continue to take decisive action to stimulate the economy and reduce the impact of the crisis on the Australian people."*

Tempering unavoidable bad news with positive, action-backed words.

Your dune challenge...

If you've got a backorder, delivery delay, price rise or *we're-very-sorry-but* piece of news for a client, deliver it straight.

Then, decide on the positive, action-focused, confidence-inspiring words that'll follow. Share your plan with the client (even if it needs consultation & tweaking).

The ocean glance...

The PM has shifted conversation from the doom to the opportunity. Wait and see if it works, but deft maneuvering to brighten otherwise cruddy news... sweet sales approach!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

10,000 hours

"Once musicians have enough ability to get into a top music school,
the thing that differentiates their careers isn't talent.
It's how hard they work.... that's it."

Malcolm Gladwell

Outliers is *New Yorker* journalist Gladwell's new book about why some people achieve exponentially more than others.

A factor he says ties mega-successes like The Beatles and Bill Gates together is 'the 10,000 hour rule'. That is, the most successful at anything (given a base level of natural ability) put more than 10,000 hours practice under their belt to hit the top.

He's not suggesting we could all write *I am the walrus* or build PC's from scratch. But if there's something you have a talent for, it's going to take you 10,000 + hours to be exceptional at it.

Your dune challenge...

Audit your professional life - have you put in 10,000 hours honing your craft - the thing clients pay handsomely for?

Make a choice - do you *want* to excel at it? Then roll up your sleeves, figure out how many hours 2009 can give you, and start investing them.

The ocean glance...

Fighting words from Seth Godin - "*Quit, or be exceptional. Average is for losers. It's invisible - the last choice. You deserve better than average!*"

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

Outliers, M Gladwell, Allen Lane, US, 2008.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Disco question

"One who asks a question is a fool for 5 minutes.

One who doesn't ask is a fool forever."

Chinese proverb

Picture a spotty young man sitting with his mates in the darkened corner of the high school disco. Eyeing off a girl who's dancing with her mates. He really wants to.... dance with her.

He's nervous - doesn't know how to ask. Scared he'll get rejected, laughed at by her friends. So, he doesn't ask - no risk. Now he'll never know if she actually fancied him - no gain for either of them. And he goes back to mucking around with his mates. Very cool.

(This of course bears no resemblance to *my* teenage years sigh.)

Your dune challenge...

Do you ever get that 15-year-old-sweating-bullets feeling before asking clients the final 'closing' question.

Are you confident you'll get a yes? If not, ask yourself why, step back and dig for any hidden objections or missed information.

Then - suck it up and ask a 'will you' question. In your own words, give a client the cue to start enjoying the benefits you've discussed.

The ocean glance...

No desire to be 15 again (although did like my mullet). But might now approach it differently - don't ask, don't usually get! Give someone the chance to start enjoying the benefits of working with you - ask a disco question!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Learned helplessness

"Habits of thinking need not be forever.

One of the most significant findings in psychology is that individuals
can choose the way they think."

Martin Seligman

'Learned helplessness' - acting helplessly when you believe you can't control your situation - was coined by Psychologist Martin Seligman in the '60's.

Seligman gave electric shocks to 2 groups of dogs (loose ethics committees back then). One group could turn the shocks off by pressing a lever; group 2 pressed and nothing happened. After a while, the dogs in group 2 stopped pressing, lay down and whined.

Months later, they ran a similar study with the same dogs, this time with walls they could jump over to avoid shocks. Some of the dogs who were helpless the first time round just lay straight down - learned helplessness.

But about 1/3 managed to find the wall and escape the shocks. They weren't hamstrung by past experiences. Optimists.

Your dune challenge...

Define a situation not going your way you feel helpless about. A door that keeps closing in your face, back orders mounting up, unreasonable demands on your time.

Consider your choice - *"It's never going to change, so I'll walk away"*, or *"There's no reason it couldn't change tomorrow... game face on, one more crack!"*

The ocean glance...

The learned helplessness vs optimism attitudes also apply to clients. Who is a better investment of your energies - those lying down whining, or those looking for the wall to jump?

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

Learned helplessness, Wikipedia 2009.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Chilly choices

Choose it. Mix it. Smash it. Try it.

The Cold Rock motto

Cold Rock Ice Cream started in Queensland in 1996 & now has 80 shops around Australia. If you haven't been (sad), you select your ice cream flavour, then pick your 'mix-ins' (everything from cookie dough and gummy bears to jaffas and Violet Crumble). Staff then smash it all together on a freezing granite benchtop and serve your creation in cups and cones.

How's the sales lessons...

- **Client in control** - *you* choose from the smorgasbord to create a "Troy combo" that maybe no-one else's ever tried
- **Ordinary or out-there** - if you like vanilla, we got it. If you want apple pie with liquorice... err, fine too!
- **Violent and velvety** - an interactive experience where you watch your masterpiece blended & bashed together

With a 1 - 100 year old demographic, (n)ice business!

Your dune challenge...

Maybe you can't smash your products & services together (without getting in trouble)... what options *can* you offer clients allowing them choice and control? Vanilla-service is a fallback, but is there something remarkable *you* could offer them?

Find a way to showcase an internal business working to a client - a benchtop glimpse to make people feel part of your team and more connected to what they're buying.

The ocean glance...

Cold Rock recently ran a '*Most Aussie Combination*' contest. The winning entry - Vanilla, Macadamias and Caramello Koala. Given choices, incentive and the chance to be creative, clients might define the perfect service mix for you!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Kite surfing

"Let's go surfin' now, everybody's learnin' how..."

The Beach Boys

Walking on the beach at Xmas, I met a guy trying to launch his kite-boarding kite. He asked for my help (no idea mate, but sure!).

Watching him set up his death rig, it struck me there's 3 things you really want to know how to do before you start kiteboarding. Learn how to take off. Know how to land. And have a plan for when it goes pearshaped. The middle bit you can probably pick up as you practice (how hard can it be....).

Your dune challenge...

Have you figured out the most natural, effective way to begin your customer conversations? The phrases, expressions, bridges and questions you've found bring *you* great results?

The happy ending - what have you previously said to bring sales conversations to a successful close?

And if things get ugly - what are your '*in case of emergency, bail out*' words? Clarify them today (rather than trying to figure them out at the time!)

The ocean glance...

Not sure if kite-man could have launched by himself, but made his life easier having a helper! Who can you approach on the beach today to help you help a client? Amazing how many people help if they're just asked!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Sales God

Knowledge... Wisdom... Magic... Victory.

His supporters speak highly of him.

Not sure there's a God of selling, but I'd vote for Odin. The Nordic Pagan God with a Hagar-the-Horrible hat, of whom it is said...

- **His quest for knowledge was never-ending** - he would wake the dead to see what he could learn from them
- **His spear never missed its target** - to keep this track-record, I imagine he chose his targets veeery carefully
- **He was a warrior, poet and possessor of great wisdom** - the iron fist, the velvet glove, and the smarts to know when to use them

A MIGHTY sales professional.

Your dune challenge...

The departing client or lost proposal - have you asked them *why* they've chosen to go elsewhere ? Might learn something that could help you in future.

Are you actively targeting business you have realistic chances of winning (& the ability to deliver high calibre results to?)

For a client conversation that's stagnating, decide today whether to nurse the relationship forward or cut it off at the knees.

The ocean glance...

Modern magic practitioners have rebadged themselves as 'illusionists'. To make illusions seamless needs unbelievable planning & practice. But looking at David Copperfield, it pays pretty well. Are you up to the effort needed to make your service look 'magic' to clients?

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

The price of opportunity

"Fish, or cut bait."

Brian Tracy.

At this very moment, there are 2 things you could be doing. The thing you're *actually* doing (reading this email), or 'something else'.

The loop question to run continually in the back of your head - *which will give me a better Return On Investment for my time and energies?* This activity, or another? What will get me closer to my targets faster, or have a better long-term impact on my success, or remove a pain I'm dealing with, or just be more fun?

Every act you perform has an opportunity cost - the price you'll pay by not doing 'the other thing' right now. You need to decide if the price is worth paying.

Your dune challenge...

Look at the map of your day. The next task on the list - is it vital that you do it right now? Is there anything more pressing on the list, or that, if you do it first, will give you / your business / a customer a better outcome?

Spend 10 seconds mentally assessing the opportunity cost. Then make the educated choice and move on the higher ROI task first.

The ocean glance...

The opportunity cost of reading these 30 second emails might be 1/2 minute less sleep or 30 seconds less chatting with a colleague. My goal is to make the perceived cost of *not* reading them too high in your mind (OK, it's a stretch goal...)

Do clients believe seeing *you* is an opportunity cost they're willing to pay?

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

Understanding your audience

"We'd like to know a little bit about you for our files..."

We'd like to help you learn to help yourself..."

Simon & Garfunkel, *Mrs Robinson*

In *Move the world*, Dean Brenner says that before presenting to an audience, there are 6 perspectives you might want to consider;

- **History** - what does the audience know about you or your track record?
- **Frames of reference** - what market situations might affect their decisions; have they had good or bad past-supplier experiences?
- **Needs & desires** - what do they want to achieve?
- **Likely objections** - what might they throw at you, real or not?
- **Capacity to act** - are you talking to decision makers, influencers or seat warmers?
- **Decision making style** - will they want facts & figures, or stories & anecdotes?

Your dune challenge...

Before building a pre-call plan for an impending meeting, consider these 6 perspectives. Take the clients viewpoint into account - their decision, so plan around how they'll approach it!

The ocean glance...

If you don't know the answers to these 6 perspectives... ask the client! You'll build rapport, trust, and get great information to tailor your presentation!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

Move the world, D Brenner, Wiley USA 2007.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

From mouths of babes

"I dream. I train. I TRY. I am a champion."

WeetBix Tryathlon slogan

On Sunday, my 7 year-old took part in a triathlon (Dad's chest puffing out... living vicariously through the kids). 700 kids and logistics to rival a space shuttle launch, it was a fantastic event all about having a go.

Afterwards, we asked her what the best bit was. She said the participation medal was good, and meeting an Adelaide Crows player was pretty cool, but her favourite bit was running past a bunch of people yelling her name and clapping for her.

Ran just a little faster after that.

Your dune challenge...

Are you being vocal enough in your praise of a colleague doing a fantastic job? A client trying to achieve something remarkable - are you actively shouting encouragement for them?

Barack for someone today - give them a boost & propel their efforts even further.

The ocean glance...

(Indulgent proud father moment # 2...) As they dressed for the bike leg, the girl next to my daughter had trouble with knotted shoelaces. My daughter picked up one of her shoes and helped her undo it. The alpha parent in me wanted to say 'get moving!', but the better part of me just about burst.

Help a colleague or client with a knotted shoelace today?

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Play off the cash register

"Miles Davis said there are no wrong notes in jazz.

Anything you have can move to something else if you have a right path."

David Amram, Composer

Tiptoeing along copyright lines, I was given a book last week I'll mention in several *Beach Runs* in coming weeks (shhh...). A cracker called *Wisdom* - a compilation of 50 interviews with famous 65+ year-olds.

One interview is with David Amram, virtuoso musician & composer-in-residence with the New York Philharmonic Orchestra. He tells the story of a 1960's jam session he had with some jazz greats. While he was playing his French horn, a cash register in the background went '*bo-la-la-binka-ding*' and confused him.

His mentor Charles Mingus said "*Come on man, don't pay any mind to that register. Next time it happens, play off it - use it as part of the music, the whole experience.*" Tune in and make the most of the situation around you.

Your dune challenge...

Is there a cash register putting you off in your sales role? Economic uncertainty, industry changes, product challenges, a noisy customer?

Use the noise to your advantage - ramp up a personal service competitors won't match, solicit feedback to refine future offerings, dig deeper with unhappy customers to get to root causes. Ask something, learn something, change something... just don't ignore the binka-ding!

The ocean glance...

Amram wisdom - "*Don't get your mind confused by what's supposed to be trendy - today's trend ends up in tomorrow's landfill. Rather, run with what you know is pure.*" Listen to your gut & do the right thing by customers - will keep the cash register going *ker-ching* for years!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

Wisdom, Andrew Zuckerman, Hachette, Sydney 2008 - all good book stores.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Be a customer

What sticks in your head?

I've run an exercise with several sales groups where they share positive experiences they've had *as customers*. From amazing supermarket checkout staff to service station attendants to the guy fixing the roof antenna, the 3 most common reasons given for *why* sales experiences stick out are;

- **"They exceeded my expectations"** - when customers perceive the average service level in an industry to be low, just clearing the bar makes you shine
- **"They weren't trying to flog me something"** - they genuinely cared about helping, they shared expertise and wisdom, even if it wasn't related to what they were selling
- **"They just did it"** - they didn't cite company policy or reasons their hands were tied on an issue; they moved quickly & kept their promises

If a 15 year-old checkout assistant can create a sales professional's most memorable sales experience....

Your dune challenge...

Think of the most positive sales or service experience you've had as a customer in the past few weeks. Got one? Consider *why* - what did they do to make it a beacon in your head?

Now translate - can you apply those principles to a customer you'll deal with today?

The ocean glance...

The common thread through almost every example I've fielded in these workshops - *individuals* created the experience, not the business or its policies.

Will someone cite *you* as the greatest sales experience they've had this month?

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Provenance

Once upon a time, long, long ago...

Watching *Life* on TV the other night (great show), Detective Cruz was talking to an artifact collector about the importance of establishing "provenance". That is, for an item to be worth something historically, you have to be able to trace a line back to its origin (otherwise it could be fake and worthless).

For salespeople, consider exploring the provenance of established customers;

- **How did they first come into contact with you** (who or what advertised or sold you to them)?
- **What was it that got them on board** (the product, service, benefit or person that pressed their buttons)?
- **What's kept them loyal** (what 'barriers to them leaving' have you built)?

(If you don't know.... ask.)

Your dune challenge...

Choose a valuable long-standing client and review their provenance. Think about, even discuss your shared history with them. Check they're still as excited about being in your client team as they were way back when.

Is there something you can offer them - new product, service or support initiative - to extend their tenure as customers & lengthen the provenance line?

The ocean glance...

The rule of provenance - if you don't know the history, you don't really know the true value. Look back to see which client relationships are truly valuable, worth reinvesting in and worth trying to emulate!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Rating pubs

Best is relative.

For the past few years, a handful of mates & I get together every couple of months for a quick after-work Coopers Pale. We call our group the Ferrari Wagons (long story) - our brief inner-Uni-student moment in otherwise busy corporate / family-man lives (I know it's sad).

We rotate watering holes and rate them, scoring on how schmick the place looks, the crowd, quality of conversation and 'X-factor'. Each time we think we've found a winner, another pub undergoes a fancy renovation and pips it.

The ratings are relative to what else is around, and first place isn't set in stone.

Your dune challenge...

Is there something you've been 'market-best' at for a while? Service responsiveness, technical expertise, likeability, range of solutions?

Cast an eye over the market and suss out which competitors are making changes, inroads or new noises. Are they striving to bump you off your market-best pedestal? Start thinking about how you'll polish your soon-to-tarnish gold standard.

The ocean glance...

People love making comparisons. Before your clients go looking to see who's stepping up & past you, make a change to keep them interested & engaged with you. Give them something new to judge against your old stuff - keep the comparisons in-house!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Your own clients

"Defer no time - delays have dangerous ends."

Shakespeare

Sweeping statement - great sales professionals are customer-focused souls who'll always make time for a loyal client (why clients love you!).

Reluctant to juggle other client meetings, the first victim of this new time request is often the 'appointment with self'. Time you were setting aside to think about how you'll improve your services, better manage your days, brush up on knowledge or plan where the next sale is coming from. A client now wants that timeslot - sure! (I'm certain I'll make it up later...)

The hardest person in the world to keep an appointment with is yourself. My contention - it's the most important appointment you'll have this week.

Your dune challenge...

Set an 'appointment with self'. 20 - 30 minutes to review your business plan, read an information update, plan a new client approach or just stare into space thinking about how you'll help your current client stable this week.

Lock it in the diary. I mean with permanent black text. Or a recurring appointment in the PDA with an alarm. Non-negotiable (so make it at a time least likely to be impacted by last minute client requests).

The ocean glance...

Like a just-gave-up smoker, the temptation to steal that spot will make you sweat. Resist the force, Luke. Think *'this time will benefit all my clients / help me find more clients / improve the human skills & knowledge resource they can tap into.'*

This weekly me/myself/I appointment is a client-focused thing to do!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

I disagree

If we both think the same way, one of us is redundant.

I'm reading a book called "*Growing great employees*" (who knows, might even have some one day!) On the cover are the words "*Turning ordinary people into extraordinary performers*".

Apart from an annoying ra-ra claim, the line bothered me for its patronising tone, & I nearly didn't borrow it. Then I read a couple of testimonials on the back (impressive) and gave it a go. Glad I did - some clever ideas around coaching, helping and getting the best from people (still ra-ra, but practical).

I'm sorely tempted to only read stuff I think I'll agree with... but I guess I'll never grow my thinking that way.

Your dune challenge...

Seek out an opinion, a way of thinking or a sales / marketing tool that you disagree with. Learn more about it - the thinking behind it or why someone else backs the idea. Compare it with your beliefs.

You might see the light... at very least you'll galvanise your current thinking... or maybe you'll discover a third line that combines the best of both approaches!

The ocean glance...

It was happy client testimonials that got me pulling out my library card to give the book a go. Are you actively seeking and sharing happy client perspectives to help you spread your gospel?

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

Growing great employees, E Andersen, Penguin USA 2006.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Bouquets and Brickbats

"Best Academy awards I've seen - so classy, so respectful!"

Oprah

"Performed like a cheesy cruiseship entertainer"

The New York Post

"I've no business being here, but what the hell - I'm having the time of my life"

Hugh Jackman

Hugh's song-n-dance hosting of the Oscars this week earned everything from rave reviews to thrown pies. Can't please everybody.

Here's how it looks like he tackled it;

...**play to your strengths** - Don't try out-funnying Billy Crystal; showcase your mighty voice & moves

...**move away from the stale** - when the ratings are flatlining, try something new

...**if you don't know how it'll be received, enjoy the ride** - you're there, they'll be judging you anyway... may as well have fun!

Your dune challenge...

Put your unique talents to use for a customer. Forget what others have done in the job before you - what do *you* bring to the table that you're confident can be helpful?

Put it on show - block out any jealous mutterings around the edges and back your approach.

And... remember to smile (and if you get pie on your face... hey, free pie!)

The ocean glance...

I liked Oprah's word - respectful (geez I'm getting old). Respectful of the talent, the ceremony, the awards history. Do clients get the sense you respect them, their time, their goals, and even your own processes?

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Postcards for friends

"Y'all come back now, y'hear!"

The Beverly Hillbillies

From *Wisdom...* Author Bryce Courtenay has spent 50 years traversing the globe, writing names of everyone he meets & likes in a little book.

With this practice he began a discipline - he writes 2 postcards each day and sends them to 2 people in the book. Sometimes he hears back, but more often not. Once he wrote to an old student roommate from Pakistan letting him know he'd be in the country soon (did he want to catch up?). Heard nothing back, assumed the guy had moved on.

When his plane landed, he was greeted with a marching band and an armed escort to the Governors House. Turns out his bludging ex-roomie was now General of Pakistan's armies.

Never know where they've gone if you don't reach out.

Your dune challenge...

Start a reconnecting or staying-in-touch habit. 1 where-are-they-now phone call or email. 1 coffee appointment with an old client or colleague. 1 touch-base with someone else servicing your market to share ideas and intell with.

One or 2 a week - start, persist and enjoy doing it (the sales outcomes might even surprise!)

The ocean glance...

Courtenay's take on what wisdom is - "*Be nice, be kind, be decent, be joyous... because then everyone else will be.*" Good juju to start a Friday with!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

Wisdom, Andrew Zuckerman, Hachette Sydney 2008.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Gelotology

"The art of medicine consists of keeping the patient amused
while nature heals the disease."

Voltaire

A smile to start your week - *Gelotology* is the study of laughter and its effects on the body.

It's the science underpinning the funding of clown doctors in kids hospitals. And why the Aussie government spent \$1M funding public servant 'Happiness Workshops' last year (err, making voters a bit unhappy).

Clinical research shows laughter aids healing and our gut tells us it's good for us. The best times of our life usually involve giggles.

Given that, do we invest enough time & effort in helping our clients experience & benefit from laughter? (I'm serious here....)

Your dune challenge...

Listen to the gelotologists & make a client laugh today. Perhaps Knock Knock's or limericks about men from Nantucket aren't right, but lighten the conversation with your unique brand of humour.

Use levity to thaw some cold-call ice & create a more receptive audience.

The ocean glance...

Grandpa always said laughter was the best medicine... perhaps that's why so many of us died from Polio (Booboom, tish! Sorry... my particular brand is a little off). Put a smile on a colleague or client's dial - cure their Monday-itis!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Habit

21 twice.

Welcome to Beach Run #42.

Self-helpers say it takes 21 days to ingrain a habit. I hope by getting these emails for twice that period, you've built a habit of reading, thinking about and acting on them.

No sermons from the Mount - I want to save you time and effort by distilling, concentrating, gift wrapping & delivering mixed ideas around 'sales' to your e-doorstep. Bite-size professional sales development, over and over and over.

You choose which ones to use, but I'll keep flying them up the flagpole.

Your dune challenge...

Is there an over-and-over service you provide to a client? Reminders, regular updates, maintenance visits, milk runs? That they've come to rely on you for - developed a habit for?

If so, find one way to reinforce it today or get one new client addicted to their Troy habit. If there's not, think about one you could start.

The ocean glance...

Give yourself 10 minutes this week to flick through the last 42 Beach Runs. Pick one that resonated with you, and act on it. Give yourself a tangible return on investment - let the early morning nags turn into something real!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Stop fiddling

"So the doctor said I wouldn't have so many nose bleeds
if I kept my finger outta there..."

Ralph Wiggum

Adelaide has just imported a "Wine writer in residence". Andrew Jefford is a Brit who's joined the Australian Wine 2030 project to help the industry manage its challenges.

Jefford believes in letting a wines *terroir* (where it comes from) shine through in the finished product. "*Talk to great winemakers, they say the years that produced their greatest wines, they themselves did nothing... all they had to do was not stuff it up!*"

He says Australian winemakers have been relatively interventionist - showcasing their skills - but "*trusting your raw materials and not imposing your personality on them is important.*"

Your dune challenge...

Is there something that gets fiddled with too much in your business? A process, material you leave for clients, a line of questioning you keep tweaking?

If it's good, trust the planning & research done to create it in the first place - deliver it as is. Stop pfaffing - invest creative juices somewhere that needs it!

The ocean glance...

South Australia also imports *Thinkers in residence* - overseas experts who spend several months bringing fresh perspectives & worldly ideas to help the state grow. Are you being a thinker in residence for your clients? Help them benefit from your worldly expertise!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

Let the terroir do the making, L Colquhoun, The Adelaide Review, March 2009.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Selling for your kids

"We are no longer 'the font of all knowledge' - the curriculum is too big.

We're learning facilitators."

Anonymous year 9 teacher

Yesterday I toured a high school my wife & I are considering for our fast-growing cherubs.

Having a somewhat humbler education pedigree, the school impressed the pants off me.

- Its sales process put most businesses to shame - from a Principal's welcome to guided tours, information packs and ease of signup.
- They discussed academic performance, co-curricular options, pastoral care, a values system and tailoring learning programs to individual kids... a well balanced benefits package.

The above comment was from a teacher we saw coaching a student in a business studies assignment. She said *"Gone are the days we can rely on a single textbook for answers - school has evolved, and we help the kids be inquisitive and guide their research."*

I don't think teachers spoke like that in my day...

Your dune challenge...

Swallow - accept you don't have all the answers for clients. So consider how you'll position yourself as a facilitator & guide... how can you plug knowledge or solution gaps to benefit the customer?

Build networks with other product / service providers, research for clients, experiment with questions to lead customers to answers for themselves... how can you facilitate positive outcomes for them?

The ocean glance...

My sharp cookie wife & I know to look beyond the teacher's words, so paid close attention to kids as we walked around. Vast majority seemed happy, confident and (really) polite.

Observing current customer satisfaction with my own 2 eyes... it's how potential future customers judge us!

(I have a feeling this is going to cost me...)

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Oops

The line between speed & accuracy.

For the eagle eyed, you'll have spotted my blue in yesterday's *Beach Run* - accidentally copied the '*insert name here*' prompt twice. My sincere apologies -it joins my odd spelling errors and frequently odd use of apostrophes.

I-dotting correctness sacrificed in getting content together & out the door without triple checking. It's a little error, but it's annoying and detracts from the perception of what might otherwise be really good work (my humble opinion only).

A great poke in the ribs - does every piece of work heading out pass a trainspotter's test?

Your dune challenge...

Review something you sent to a client several months ago. With fresh eyes, does it get through the grammar / spelling / punctuation filter unscathed? Is the tone and message right?

Now relook at something heading out the door today (print if need - paper's easier to spot errors on than the screen). Is it right?

The ocean glance...

Not everyone's a trainspotter, and conventional sales wisdom advises against pointing out errors some mightn't consider important. But.... others will. To them (and the rest who are OK with txt msging) - my commitment to do better!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

(PS any errors in here are surely deliberate.... :-)

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Scoops, studies and silks

"Rrrr - acing!"

Dig out your fascinator - the Adelaide Cup horse race is on today. For those happy to part with their hard-earned, which type of punting method do you apply?

- **Scoop** - Take the word of a friend who tells you "*I know a bloke who knows a bloke who said number ... is a shoo-in.*"
- **Study** - Read the form guide, make an informed decision based on the horse / jockey / trainer's track record
- **Silks** - make a choice based on how beautiful the horse is, what colour the jockey is wearing or because 42 is your favourite number.

Hot tip - clients make decisions about *you* like this...

Your dune challenge...

Do you tick all 3 boxes for *your* punters?

Scoopers - are those in the know (industry opinion leaders) actively recommending you?

Studios - does your track record inspire confidence (and are you making it visible for prospective clients to make educated choices)?

Silk-pickers - do you look & sound the part - would people naive to your industry have a good first-impression feel about you?

The ocean glance...

Choosing a supplier is a punt - load the odds in your favour by recognising and working on ways to appeal to the different buyer types. Giddyup!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Sugar, spice 'n' puppy dog tails

Nowhere to hide...

Beach runner Simon has been, managed and dealt with sales representatives for years. Here's the sales pitch he got from his 13 y.o. daughter last week.

5 months out from her birthday, she built Dad a Powerpoint presentation - *"Why you should buy me a dog for my birthday"*. Breeds, features, benefits and recommendations. Simon offered 1 objection - what about holidays?

The next day, she offered a revised presentation covering the holiday issue, plus dealt with 10 other potential objections he might have had. Rather than go in for the kill though, she let him quietly stew on it.

The clincher - next day over breakfast, asked Simon if he would be taking time off during school holidays. When he asked why, she said *"I'd like you to teach me how to train the dog, so it behaves well all the time."*

Your dune challenge...

Ask a bold question of a client you've got a great relationship with. Extra business, a new line, a referral - something you've held back from, but feel you've earned the right to.

If you get an objection, acknowledge it, try dealing with it, but don't rub it in - let the client preserve face. Tread slowly and subtly ... but if you really want it, keep treading!

The ocean glance...

Simon's daughter gave him pictures of the dog she'd love, grabbing him emotionally. Are the words, pictures or deeds you offer clients enough to connect with *them* emotionally?

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Learning cultures

"Constantly question where you are. When you stop wanting to know, you're dead. You're walking, but you're dead."

Billy Connolly

In 2002, the Australian National Training Authority studied a group of organisations identified as having a culture of, or commitment to, *learning*.

Here's 3 common threads they found about learning cultures;

- **Learning initiatives are driven by business, market or personnel changes.** When everything is static & hunky dory in your business, there's little focus on learning. Something has to change to prompt people to drive learning initiatives. Either wait for change to be forced on you, or create a change yourself.
- **The more empowered people are to make decisions, the stronger the desire to learn.** Overly prescriptive managers that tell people what and how to work don't inspire learners.
- **Learning cultures are supported by external parties.** Supply chain partners, service providers, even customers - if they place importance on learning, then your learning efforts should prove more fruitful.

Your dune challenge...

Anticipate a change coming for your business, or imagine one you might drive to benefit you and your customers. What will you need to learn to make it work, and how will you share your learnings with others?

Align yourself with someone committed to learning - a colleague, friend, boss, supplier, client, network partner, consultant. Someone you can share with, whose motivation will rub off on you and vice versa. Learning alone is tiring - find a study buddy.

The ocean glance...

"That's all very nice Troy, but what's learning got to do with me, the MIGHTY sales professional?" My contention; learning = questioning + listening + translating. So sales professionals are professional learners. If you're not asking, listening and learning, then you're not growing or thriving.... and you'll be outsold tomorrow.

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

"Case studies of organisations with established learning cultures", R Johnson & G Hawke, NCVET 2002 (www.ncver.edu.au).

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Dying Elms

You can only neglect them for so long...

On the Greenhill Rd median strip adjacent Adelaide's Parklands, 158 old Elm trees are dying.

Due to water restrictions, the council stopped watering them several years ago. After several consecutive years of drought, arborists say many won't recover.

They're big trees with deep root systems and can sustain reasonable periods of not being watered. But even the biggest, hardiest, low maintenance trees need sustenance.

Are your biggest, hardiest, low maintenance clients getting a little sprinkling from you?

Your dune challenge...

Pick a low-maintenance client you've left alone awhile. The one that never complains, you've trained to be self-sufficient, they only call you if they have a problem... give them some attention before they ask (or die).

The ocean glance...

It's easy to just focus on squeaky wheels or the next client you're gunning to sign up - ironically it's the low maintenance ones you really want. Preventatively water a quiet client relationship - keep it happy & healthy!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

So I read the funnies

To be continued...

The newspaper comics break up my otherwise serious breakfast table reading (No, I don't want to grow up). Critics hat on...

I've never gotten into *The Phantom* - a never-ending story that, per episode, doesn't offer much substance.

Fred Bassett aims for one-off laughs rather than continued stories (but usually lame).

For Better or For Worse is the Canadian strip that recently finished its record-breaking 29-year run. It aimed to provoke a laugh (or sometimes tears) every single day, but constantly segued into tomorrow's strip to keep you reading.

Which comic strip are you for your customers?

Your dune challenge...

Do clients view conversations with you as...

...'an ongoing relationship, but I can't really see where it's going',

...'good fun one-off moments, but can't see a good reason to speak again next week', or

...'always offering something valuable & enjoyable... I need to keep the conversation going'?

The ocean glance...

The Phantom has a (dying) cult following. *Fred Bassett* gets skimmed over with little loyalty. *For Better or For Worse* genuinely engaged readers in long term relationships. Pick the strip you want to represent your approach!

(& those with imaginary clients might want to pick *Calvin & Hobbes*).

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Help clients measure

66%

Percentage of internet users regularly accessing Google.*

David Fischer is big kahuna of online sales at Google & is responsible for Google Adwords (largest search advertising vehicle on the planet).

In *Online Marketing Heroes*, Fischer suggests one reason for Adwords success is the real-time reporting it offers customers. "*You can see how many people see your ad, how many click on it, and can even figure out how many people buy a product as a result of the ads.*"

They're giving customers a way to measure how well their investment is performing.

Your dune challenge...

Help a client assess their investment with you. Give them the questions to analyse cost savings, an outcome they'd expect to achieve, a qualitative feedback survey... something that lets them (and you) know if you're living up to expectations.

If you can't find a measure, ask for an anecdote... "*Are you happy with the product / service / processes / outcomes you're investing in here?*"

The ocean glance...

Helping clients critique their spend means wearing your heart on your sleeve. But... they're going to do it in their own heads anyway (& tell others about it)! Make it easy - give them an assessment framework of *your* choosing.

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

* *Online marketing heroes*, M Miller, Wiley, Indiana 2008.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Choosing

"In a sky full of people, only some want to fly... isn't that crazy?"

Seal

Every financial expert you listen to says *'right now, fundamentally strong stocks are down, but they'll go back up'*. Yet only a handful of people will take advantage of blue-chips on special.

Tradespeople know that all they have to do to differentiate themselves from the pack is turn up on time (or at all) to quote a job. Yet so few do.

Salespeople know it's easier to keep existing clients than find new ones. Yet as business thins out, the first thing many do... abandon loyalty and go chase strange cars.

We know the answers, they aren't rocket science.... it's choosing to apply them.

Your dune challenge...

Make a choice - do something you know is the right thing for your clients, your business, yourself, *longer term* that the rest of the pack seems to be forgetting. Hold your nerve longer than the next person - try & avoid knee-jerk reactions.

The ocean glance...

Market nervousness breeds strange decisions that in calmer markets seem stupid. Apply the hindsight that you know will come... today. Stick with your sensible customer-focused sales strategy!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Simulation

"Mrs Hamilton said practice makes perfect, Dad!"

My 5 year-old yesterday, jumping around the house with her new skipping rope

A client's business sells CPR simulation technology to doctors, nurses and ambo's. Mannequins designed for the green and the experienced to help them practice, refine and update skills in keeping people alive.

Pilots use simulators throughout their careers to practice the unforeseen. Athletes simulate game day in their training sessions. Year 12 students do mock exams to get a feel for the real thing come year end.

Professionals simulate processes to help them excel at what they do.

Dedicating enough time to mock selling?

Your dune challenge...

Confront those dreaded words... role-play... and find a way to practice a conversation you'll have with a client this week. For the chicken-hearted, use the mirror behind closed doors. For the serious, grab a colleague and physically speak the words you're considering. Get them to be devils advocate, cover off likely traps, figure out what needs extra polishing.

Mightn't be aiming for perfect, but any practice is better than raw and underdone.

The ocean glance...

"But it's uncomfortable / what if they laugh at me / I'm too busy / I know what I'm doing..." Sure you do - so does the 50 year-old surgeon atop their game (over in the corner practicing on the surgical simulator). Where would you rather stuff up - in your practice session, or the clients office?

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Nothing people

Like talking to a brick wall...

In sales travels, you deal with those who are mostly agreeable to your stories, and others who'll call your black 'white' just to be contrary. But maybe most frustrating: those you get nothing from but blank stares & stony silence.

Dr's Rick Brinkman and Kirschner call them 'nothing people', and offer 5 ideas to break their silence;

- **Plan enough time** - extract teeth slowly, don't be under the pump to get them talking.
- **Ask expectant open-ended questions** - nothing that can be answered just 'yes' or 'no' - make it clear that details are needed.
- **Lighten it up** - make an absurd verbal guess at what they're thinking, try humour to break the veneer.
- **Guess** - put yourself in their shoes and state what you think they're feeling. If you're close or way off, they may feel compelled to correct you.
- **Show the future** - explain what could happen if they won't share ideas or feedback with you. Get them out of the moment.

Your dune challenge...

For the next dead fish you sit opposite this week, try getting them talking & opening up about themselves, their situation or what they'd like from you.

Don't be in a rush, make it tough for them to stay silent (even if it's to correct your incredibly wrong assumptions).

The ocean glance...

It might be shyness, a form of aggression or a power play - but if you don't get them talking, you won't know and you can't help. And if you can't help, you don't sell. Help nothing's share something!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

Dealing with difficult people, R Brinkman & R Kirschner, McGraw Hill, New York 2003.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Photographers pick best rep

"Pretend that every single person you meet has a sign around their neck that says "*Make me feel important*".

Mary Kay Ash

PICA, the Photo Imaging Council of Australia, asks its retail camera store members to vote each year on the best supplier sales representative they deal with. Suppliers nominate a shortlist of people for them to choose from (gotta be exceeding your annual sales targets regularly to make the list...).

The criteria they suggest customers nominate by are;

- Provides prompt & efficient client service
- Always follows through on promises & commitments
- Demonstrates great product knowledge (including competitors)
- Maintains a close working relationship with the customer

Under these criteria, would you take the gong in *your* industry?

Your dune challenge...

Dare yourself today to get customers mentally scoring you 10/10 in 'promptness', 'efficiency', 'follow-up', 'product knowledge (yours and competitors)' and 'staying close to business partners'. Just for a day.

Then try again tomorrow...

The ocean glance...

Your employer has to nominate you to have a crack at the award. But tick the customer criteria boxes enough times & the numbers will take care of themselves... then you're a walk-up start!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

(www.yaffa.com.au/vote)

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Selling tennis racquets

"It's not hard to be a good rep, but it's very difficult to be an exceptional rep.

Little things like creativity & work ethic make the difference."

Greg Mason, Sales Director, HEAD Tennis racquets

Running with our 'industry-best' theme, Hunter Hines was last year voted the Sales Rep of the Year for the US Racquet Sports Industry.

"He's the best rep in the world" says one client. "He's so attentive to anything we need - he steps up & does it himself or finds the person who can." Hines offers 4 bits of advice to getting endorsed as the best;

- **Be creative** - build promotions or email competitions for customers no-one's ever done before. The prizes don't have to be huge - just take the time.
- **Don't just focus on managers & decision-makers** - Hines makes a point of getting to know every receptionist and racquet stringer in shops... "they're all important."
- **Know your stuff** - be intimate with your offerings and your competitors - "then you speak honestly & from personal experience."
- **Enjoy yourself** - if you aren't having fun, you won't be motivated to put in the hours... and the hours make a difference.

Retailers write in asking HEAD to "clone Hunter".

Your dune challenge...

Let your creative juices flow - think up an innovative service / reward / competition / promotion for top clients. Doesn't have to cost a bomb - just stand out from the crowd.

Up your competitor knowledge today - test drive, read about or Google an adversaries offering. Find a way to use it - even to push you to build a 'how I'll sell against it' approach.

The ocean glance...

It's taken me over 300 daily emails to Google the words 'Best Sales Rep' (yep, little slow off the mark). But with 12 keystrokes, I've come across a fantastic lesson from the best tennis racquet salesperson in America. And it all came from a comment in a Beach Runner's feedback form. Ask for feedback... get creative with Google... 42-love!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

2007 Sales Rep of the Year - Hunter Hines, Mitch Rustad, www.racquetsportsindustry.com

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Teaching process vs outcome

"Too much weights, not enough speed work."

Jake the Muz

In Saturday's *The Australian*, the Primary School Principals Association slammed the National Curriculum Board for being too focused on *learning processes* and not enough on *scientific content*.

They claim teachers are being asked to focus heavily on teaching methodology, values and attitudes.... all very nice, but coming at the expense of teaching explicit scientific knowledge & skills. They are pushing for a 'back to basics' approach - ensuring students are taught sufficient *outcomes* as well as *processes*.

Does your sales approach adequately address both?

Your dune challenge...

Do a process & outcome checklist for a client you'll visit this week. Are you happy they value the processes you're walking through with them? Call frequency, paperwork, education, follow-up, after-sales service... is it what they want and need from you?

Now outcomes - are you actually helping them fix a problem / grow their business with your widget / service / idea? Have they got a tangible, positive ROI you can hang your hat on?

The ocean glance...

It's teaching the client how to fish versus giving them fish... one approach feeds them today, the other tomorrow. Both important - check that you aren't leaning too far to one side of the boat!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

Science curriculum 'an insult', Justine Ferrari, The Weekend Australian 21/3/09.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Client events & beer

A little amber hospitality.

Client-supplier relationships are forged in one-on-one conversations. But creating in-house group forums for loyal customers (and those you'd like to be) is a mighty sales activity. The reason you'd hold one? Think BEER.

- **B onding** - invite people to your premises to get to know them better, ask questions about them / their challenges / business / goals
- **E xposure** - showcase your latest products, service, people and processes; let people know different ways you can help them
- **E ducation** - give people an 'I learnt something' moment; train them how to use your stuff, get a better ROI or even help themselves
- **R eward** - thank people for their time / business / loyalty / efforts / \$

Show a little hospitality, remember the beer and sales opportunities will flow.

Your dune challenge...

Come up with a forum for clients and prospects that's creative, will interest them and covers the BEER criteria.

An in-house morning tea / afterwork drink / training session / guest presenter / workshop / new product release.... If they can't come to you, take it to them - offer the same in their premises. Book in a date - then get busy brewing!

The ocean glance...

Client forums take a little effort & often live on the '*nice to do if we get time*' list. Which is why your competitors aren't doing them. As the economic downturn bites, create a little excitement for your customers... put on a show with beer!

(An acronym for "Cabernet Sauvignon" some other time)

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Making shingles

"A meaningful job is one where you feel that in some way you are either
reducing people's pain or increasing their pleasure."

Alain de Botton

At Lake Lumber in Oregon, Mike Gardner and his son Levi turn discarded forestry logs and tree stumps into roof shingles.

Dirty Jobs TV host Mike Rowe interviewed one of the guys who spends all day on a hydraulic log splitter, cutting the bad wood away from good.

Mike asked him *"Do you like the job?"*. He said *"Yeah - it's very satisfying. I'm outdoors, using my hands, and making something useful out of scrap that was getting thrown away."*

Your dune challenge...

Remind yourself of the meaning of your work today. Who benefits from your efforts; who are you helping; what are you doing to increase someone's pleasure or remove their pain? Is there someone new you could try doing it for today?

A guy cutting waste timber in the woods sees benefit in what he's doing...

The ocean glance...

Clients & colleagues also want to know they're doing meaningful work. Maybe some positive words from you can pump their tyres up & remember that they're doing something valuable!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

Dirty Jobs, Season 4 Episode 4, Discovery Channel, 2008.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Short arms, long pockets

"What we obtain too cheap, we esteem too lightly."

Thomas Paine

Price objections come in different flavours - dollars ("*you're too expensive*"); time ("*I'm too busy*") and effort ("*I can't be bothered*").

Ideas for dealing with price concerns;

1. **Expect them** - if they never come, you're not asking for enough.
2. **Clarify them** - ask what it is or why they feel that the price is too high - throw it back to sort red herrings from real objections.
3. **Quarantine them** - shrink the objection; get agreement on the one single reason they've formed this view.
4. **Discuss them** - talk about proportionally higher value than the investment they'll make; focus on outcomes worth more to them than the asking price.
5. **Reframe them** - inject yourself into the price; shift them from thinking about what they'll give up to what they'll get... from you.
6. **Flex for them** - if there are good reasons to find middle ground, know in advance where you can go to.
7. **Stand firm in front of them** - pant-dropping on price is what got the planet's economy into this fine mess. Be proud of your asking price - 'twill never be for everybody!

Your dune challenge...

Identify a dollar / time / effort objection you've been handed from a client, colleague, boss or team member.

Run your eye down the list & try an approach you've not yet. Get them thinking 'investment benefits' versus 'cost implications'. And if you can't - move on. Others need your help & are willing to pay for it!

The ocean glance...

Research* shows around 18% of people make final decisions based on price. But 39% make them based on *your competence* as a partner. If you can't or don't want to touch the price, show them your competence and why you're worth it!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

* *Achieve Sales Excellence*, Stevens & Kinni, Platinum Press, US, 2008. Interviews with 80,000 B2B customers.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Take the trouble

"Sometimes you want to go, where everybody knows your name..."

Cheers

At a kids birthday at the YMCA this weekend, my and 14 other screaming girls jumped, ran and swang on gym equipment.

They were supervised by a guy who, when they first arrived, made a concerted effort to learn & memorise each girl's name. He asked them, repeated it aloud to make sure he got it right, then said '*pleased to meet you, so-and-so.*'

Not only did he then know who to yell at when they got overly-kamikaze, he built an instant bond with each child (who responded as soon as he called).

No mean feat for 8-year olds full of sugar.

Your dune challenge...

The client you're going in to see this afternoon... remember the receptionist's name? The client's children or partner's name? The name of their pet project?

Make an effort. Ask, repeat, rephrase. Write it down in post-call notes & refer back to it before the next conversation. Be Ted Danson for someone today.

The ocean glance...

When the kids were learning correct use of the apparatus, Y guy said "*The most important rule, girls.... it's a party, so have FUN!*". 15 screaming 8-year-olds mightn't be your brand of fun, which is why you've chosen to spend 38+ hours a week doing something else.... so *enjoy it* this fine Monday!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Clean sales lines

"Neutrality & simplicity are powerful communication tools, because they're clean."

Massimo Vignelli

"And because they work, most of the time."

Lella Vignelli

The husband and wife design team that created the "United Colours of Benetton" branding and the iconic New York subway signs have a minimalist philosophy.

Their approach to building the client a design solution;

- First understand their need, their problem, the pain they face
- Come up with many different ideas
- Collaborate - let others offer their opinion & guidance
- Work by subtraction - cut away the imperfect & extraneous; simplify
- Look for consistency - does the design look and feel right?
- Make sure it works

Massimo - *"If it doesn't work, if it's not understood - forget it."*

Your dune challenge...

Apply clean-line design principles to your efforts today. To a conversation you'll have with a client or colleague; the questions you'll ask them; the benefits you'll tell them about; a proposal you're sending out.

Does it demonstrate understanding of the other person's problem? Have you cut it back to simplest form? Does it make complete sense, & most of all, will it *work* for them?

The ocean glance...

Lella - *"I would tell aspiring designers to go back and see some good things that were done before."* Learn from your past actions, remembering what's worked & what hasn't. Improve on history, don't ignore it!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

Referenced from *Wisdom*, A Zuckermann, Hachette 2008 (buy it!) and www.vignelli.com .

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

1 down, 3 left

"The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago.

The next best time is now."

Chinese Proverb

Today, 2009 is 25% gone. The chances you have to find new clients, keep existing clients loyal and referring, generate goodwill and solve people's problems this year are down by 1/4.

If you were waiting on something to happen - the economy to turn around, daylight savings to finish, someone to invite you inside, a purchase order, a lucky break - stop waiting. Do more, find more, ask more, plan more, show more.

The good news - 75% of a potentially amazing sales year left.

Off your bum.

Your dune challenge...

Stop for 10 minutes & assess where on the road you sit towards achieving your '09 goals. What's worked really well in Q1 that's helped you? What would you do differently given time over?

Critically, is there enough clear opportunity in your pipeline to smash your number by Christmas? If so, take the next step with each opportunity ASAP. If not, start searching - who else could use and might just pay for your brand of problem solving?

The ocean glance...

The Beach Runs are 25% done for '09 - do you feel you've got your \$23 dollars worth? If so - fantastic (keep reading & applying). If not, hold 2 of us responsible - me (give me feedback, help me improve them) and you (they're only useful if you read and apply them - try it today!)

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Customers doing your job

"Testimonials are a very powerful strategy."

Todd Sampson, Leo Burnett Advertising on *The Gruen Transfer*

A celebrity endorsement of razor blades, someone taking the Napisan doorstep challenge, the referee at the bottom of your CV - getting other happy campers to sell *for you* is an effective sales approach.

Testimonial tips;

- **Ask** - when clients are pumping your tyres up proclaiming happiness with your services, harness it - get a written testimonial, check they're happy for their name to be mentioned to other potential clients
- **Share** - in print, on websites, through conversations, at events - find lots of ways to spread the clients story (they might even be miffed if you don't)
- **Thank** - you mightn't pay in \$, but expressing genuine gratitude to those blowing your trumpet is vital to maintaining goodwill
- **Reverse** - get clients advertising their own testimonials. Plant seeds in their head - *"If you're happy with what we're doing for you, would you mind telling others..."*
- **Reciprocate** - is there a testimonial / plug / good word / some direction you can offer them in return?

As one man vouches - *"Testimonials are great!"* (T Forrest, sales guy)

Your dune challenge...

Ask for or share a client testimonial today. Someone not just happy with the nuts'n'bolts you help them with, but with your brand of service.

The ocean glance...

Evan Williams, the guy who founded Twitter, said *"It seems when you give people more ways to share information, more good things happen."*

Share a client's story about dealing with you - make more good things happen!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Cold leadership lessons

"There are a lot of good things in the world,
but I'm not sure that comradeship is not the best of them all -
to know that you can do something big for another chap."

Sir Ernest Shackleton

In 1914, explorer Ernest Shackleton and his crew wrecked their ship off Antarctica. For 2 years, stranded 1,200 miles from anywhere, Shackleton kept his 27-man crew alive and their spirits together. When the ice shelf they lived on broke up, he led them to escape in 3 rowboats, 800 miles over freezing seas. All survived, and all in good spirits. (They had to eat dogs and seals, but hey, given the circumstances...)

During the trek, when others around needed rest & were ready to chuck it in, he pushed himself to make sure the whole job was done. His very British words - *"If you're a leader - a fellow other fellow's look up to - you've got to keep going."*

Why he's been described by some as the 'greatest leader that ever came'.

Your dune challenge...

On the days your mojo just isn't working, consider who looks to you for guidance, stability or energy. Clients wanting reassurance, colleagues needing tyre-pumping, bosses scared a sales slump will spell doom for the business. What game-face do you need to put on for them?

Have a bite of seal (joking), and keep rowing.

The ocean glance...

And when it all gets too hard? Actively seek inspiration and leadership from others. Your boss, a friend, a successful client - watch how they're paddling and copy them!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

Shackletons way, M Morrell & S Capparell, Brealey Publishing, Great Britain, 2003. (Great book!)

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Look for Doppelgangers

Specialise in client types.

Doppelganger is the German term for your double - someone who looks just like you.

(Brad Pitt? My wife says no...)

When considering who to try recruiting into your team of happy customers, it pays to profile your current best clients - search for their doppelgangers;

- **Need** - identify prospects with problems or ambitions just like others you've successfully helped
- **Processes** - you know how to cross t's and dot i's for this type of client
- **Ability** - like top customers, they're willing & able to pay for your help
- **Personality** - you just *get* these type people - you enjoy dealing with them and vice-versa

You'll never truly find 2 of a kind (doppelgangers are mythical.... maybe). But looking for common traits between current and future happy clients saves a lot of wheel reinventing.

Your dune challenge...

List your 5 best current or recent clients - profitable, enjoyable and you added immense value to. Who else in the market might have similar needs & processes - where do they live? Who can pay? Who will you click with?

If you don't know, ask your current clients, networking partners, jump on Google, review trade publications. Build a 'happy client doppelganger prospect list'.

The ocean glance...

Superstitiously, to actually see your doppelganger is bad luck. Making assumptions about someone that looks like, sounds like, feels like your best customer will almost certainly bring you bad sales luck. Great questioning and need diagnosis rules still apply!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

Theatrical selling

"If all the world's a stage, where does the audience sit?"

Anon.

In *The Experience Economy*, B. Joseph Pine and James Gilmore assert that successful organisations find ways to move beyond selling commodities, goods or services, and offer their customers *experiences*.

They suggest there are 4 forms of 'theatre experiences' you can offer customers;

- **Improv theatre** - give customers off-the-cuff, unplanned, spontaneous positive experiences
- **Platform theatre** - pick your stage, plan, rehearse, tread the boards & execute a show for customers to watch & enjoy
- **Matching theatre** - like splicing scenes together to make a movie, creating a series of consistently themed smaller experiences that add together to give a great overall impression
- **Street theatre** - Engaging & involves the audience, appears random but actually has a lot of preparation and planning behind it

The suggest all have a place in business, but know in advance which form of theatre your experience involves.

Your dune challenge...

Give a customer a theatrical experience this month. Maybe improv - spontaneously (genuinely) compliment a customer. Maybe platform - think deeply about a customers needs, then plan, rehearse and deliver a mighty benefits proposal to them.

Maybe matching - use your call notes to repeat an upbeat meeting with a client and revisit the little details important to them. Maybe street - have a customer into your premises & make them feel 'one of the cast'.

The ocean glance...

Each theatre form needs either meticulous planning, flawless execution or unabashed confidence to make it look great. Go for the trifecta - have your client audience applauding with their wallets!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The Experience Economy, B. Joseph Pine & James Gilmore, Harvard Business School Press, 1999.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Scared

"Have you ever had the odds stack up so high,
you need a strength most don't possess?"

Mighty Mighty Bosstones

Are you scared of your sales target?

Scared you haven't got enough prospects on your list to hit it?

Scared the economy is making it too difficult to grow revenue?

Scared you don't have enough time today to do everything that needs doing?

Scared your best customer might leave you for a slick courting competitor?

Scared your great idea won't be embraced by others?

Scared you'll put your foot in it during a big impending presentation?

Scared you don't know all the answers to questions they'll ask?

Scared they'll say no?

You're not Robinson Crusoe there.

Your dune challenge...

Pick something that scares you in your role. Be really clear about it - what exactly worries you?

Take heart knowing *everyone else that's having a go* is scared witless too. Then slap a bridle on your fear - adopt the 'won't die wondering' mindset. Make a plan and take a next-action-step to tread on the scary bits. Then do it again tomorrow.

The ocean glance...

Every day I write these, I'm scared they won't be liked, understood or people won't feel they're getting value for money. So I try a bit harder to make them better, thinking "*They've already paid, so you better deliver, email-boy!*". Let scaredycat-ness push you a bit further!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

You can't have just one

"Research tells us that 14 out of every 10 people like chocolate."

Sandra Boynton

Our local swimming school puts a bowl of tiny chocolate eggs on the counter in the week leading up to Easter.

There's no strict rule of 1-per child and grown-ups are encouraged to have one too. This is a large franchise corporation full of policies and procedures, but at Easter, they put a little human thanks-have-a-happy-break touch for their clients to indulge in.

Makes clients feel more like friends and family... and family stick around.

(Especially in the holidays...)

Your dune challenge...

Invest \$3 in a pack of small chocolate eggs and hand a couple out to the clients you visit today. Give them some child-like joy.

Too cheesy / cheap / melty for you? Add words like *'have a really happy Easter break'* to each email that leaves your PC today. Let people know you're thinking of them and their well-deserved rest.

The ocean glance...

This is the only public holiday break until Xmas the Beach Run will have... 4 days to get new perspectives and freshen the approach to this service. (4 days email free for you! Haaaaa....)

Hope you get to mentally refresh this Easter to give *your* clients the benefit of fresh perspective!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day, and a very happy Easter break!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Teach yourself

"Learn everything you can, anytime you can, from anyone you can.

There will always come a time when you'll be grateful you did."

Sarah Caldwell

The Personal MBA (www.personalmba.com) is a DIY business education website. No fees, no curriculum and no degree's are offered - just a group of people sharing their wisdom, recommending books, submitting articles and uploading presentations to help others build their business savvy.

It's part of a growing online trend - new vehicles to help people learn in their own way and own time. You can wait for your employer to pony up the money, or the next semester to begin, or your workload to ease, or the kids to get older before enrolling.

Or you can take control of your own professional development in bite size pieces.... right now.

Your dune challenge...

Be honest about something you've wanted to learn more about or get better at.... but just haven't got around to it yet.

Is there more than 1 way to do it? Websites, courses, books, mentors, colleagues who have the experience (and might be willing to share)? Is it that the bigger issue is time? Block 10 minutes out of your day to take a nibble.

Then book 10 more out tomorrow.

The ocean glance...

Spoon-fed learning ended in high-school (well, except for that OH&S course they're making you go to...). Decide what you want to excel at, look at the different learning options, and sequester small chunks of time to drive your own professional development!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Bear Grylls

"I should have cut the main parachute and gone to the reserve,
but I thought there was enough time to resolve the problem."

Bear Grylls after breaking his back in a parachuting accident

I know who I want to be when I grow up....

Edward 'Bear' Grylls is an Eton-educated, SAS-trained cross between James Bond and Steve Irwin. His Discovery Channel show *Man vs Wild* sees him freefalling into the most inhospitable landscapes on earth and showing armchair athletes how to survive with just bare hands and street smarts. Supercool.

Before he got famous though, Bear jumped out of a plane, had a chute failure and shattered 3 vertebrae. His comment above is the lesson he nearly didn't learn.

Don't let stubbornness make you wait 'til its too late to go to plan B.

Your dune challenge...

The sales initiative that seemed so full of promise, but isn't producing the results you want... is it time to cut it loose?

Review your pet project or the words you've been trying in sales conversations or the cold-calling strategies. If they aren't delivering at the rate you anticipated, make the break and rethink.

The ocean glance...

Bear's belief in the 3 things that will keep you alive when it all goes pearshaped - be prepared, use common sense, and trust the human spirit. Plan, think and believe.... top sales survival advice!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

(PS If you haven't seen Bear in action, 'Google video' him - wait until you've eaten though)

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Flowers and ribbons

"Single blooms get left alone. Banks of colour sell."

Anabelle Lewis

VV Rouleaux is a specialty shop in London - they sell nothing but ribbons. They pioneered the now-popular use of ribbons for causes like hostage freedom, breast cancer & HIV.

Anabelle Lewis, the ex-florist who set Rouleaux up in 1990, created a store described as a 'cross between a fantasy sewing box and a rainbow factory'. Experience taught her that solitary ribbon spools on shelves didn't attract attention (or sales).

But putting lots of complimentary & contrasting colours together caught buyers eyes and helped them choose *what* they'd buy (rather than *if* they'd buy).

Your dune challenge...

Look for ways to give your clients a 'bank of choices' rather than make all or nothing decisions. Setting up an appointment - offer a choice of times rather than asking '*would you like to meet?*'. Instead of asking *if* they want to buy a widget, check which would suit them better - small, medium or large?

If you have only 1 product or service in your bag (and it only comes in black), inject yourself into the choice bank. "*There are a range of after-sales support services I can assist you with - which would be most valuable to you....?*"

The ocean glance...

A good trade-display is a bit like the ribbon shop. One customer visiting your booth isn't that attractive to other passers-by. But when there's 4 or 5, then every looky-loo wants to know what the fuss is about.

Find ways to show potential clients that there's plenty of people interested in what you're doing - come see why!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

Trading Places - Europe's finest specialist shops, Hattie Ellis, Mitchell Beazley, London 2000.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

You'll be disappointed

When others don't reach the bar you set...

If you think you're outstanding at your work; if you take great pride in what you do and how you do it; if you have high expectations of yourself....

...you're going to be disappointed.

You'll see clients that don't quickly grasp the brilliance of what you offer them.

Colleagues that don't see the need to set their standards as high as yours.

People that don't follow your lead or respond as quickly as you think they should.

Frustrating.

Tough love though - it's not their problem....

Your dune challenge...

Review a professional disappointment you've just suffered - a client that just didn't get it; a colleague that let you down; a boss that didn't back you the way you wanted.

Try 3 things. 1 - accept it (it's done). 2 - revise your expectations of others. Expect and plan for less support, acceptance or vision than the lofty standard you set for yourself.

3 - apply your amazing sales skills to inspire, engage and pave the way for others to follow your lead. Keep showcasing the benefits of Troy's way.

The ocean glance...

The temptation is to let lower standards become your own. Don't. If you truly believe in and have seen promising results from your benchmark professional behaviours, back yourself. Maintain the sales rage!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

The service ethic

"You may consider selling to be a rather obvious part of a salesperson's job.
But to many salespeople, "selling" is somehow considered inappropriate behaviour.
Frightening but true."

Shaun Belding

Shaun Belding used to own a chain of toy stores & now trains customer service.

He contends that salespeople are first and foremost service people, and there are 6 functions of a great service person.

1. **They sell** - they don't wait for phones to ring; they dig, ask, present, confirm and arrange mutually beneficial arrangements. They don't wait.
2. **They make customers comfortable**
3. **They are ambassadors for your business**
4. **They are always positive**
5. **They are always honest**
6. **They care** - and you can just tell.

Your dune challenge...

For the next conversation you'll have with a current or potential customer, review the 6-point list and commit to a specific act to demonstrate each function. Don't assume you'll do it automatically - plan it in advance.

The ocean glance...

Belding- *"Customer service may well be the most undervalued occupation on the planet"*. That list sounds remarkably simple, but done well for every customer every day, your business goes bananas. Be a MIGHTY customer service person today!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

Dealing with the customer from hell, S Belding, Kogan Page, Ontario, 2005.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

The perception piggy bank

"Don't sweat the petty things and don't pet the sweaty things."

George Carlin

Doing this weekend's grocery shopping, a young bloke scanned my Weet-Bix, Granny Smiths and Lolly snakes (half-healthy).

In the plus column, he gave me a big smile, eye contact and friendly g'day.

In the minus, was dripping perspiration (great you work hard, but don't sweat on my sweetcorn).

Plus, said 'thank you' every time I took a full bag off his hands (*no, thank you*).

Minus - bit sluggish on the scanner. Mmmm.

Plus - gave me a timely reminder about plastic bags disappearing from supermarkets (going green's gonna cost me, but I needed to know).

Minus.... no more minuses.

Pluses win - good sales experience, happy camper.

Your dune challenge...

A customer you're aiming to please - consider the perception account you've opened with them.

Credits - do they like you? Think you're positive? Adding value? Fixing problems? Being proactive?

Debits - do you make them wait? Experiencing hiccups? Giving them confusing choices? Chewing into their already busy schedule?

What's the balance *right now*? Plan to deposit a credit today - get the line moving upwards.

The ocean glance...

You don't have to be perfect to give customers a great experience - just bank more in the plus column. And if you're perspiring in your efforts to please, wear a sweatband. Make things appear 'efficient, but effortless'!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Don't believe your own press

"History is not pre-determined.

There is, at any point in time, a number of possible futures.

Every crisis (moves us from one possibility) to another."

George Yeo

In his recent speech at Cambridge University's 800th anniversary celebrations, Singapore's Foreign Affairs Minister George Yeo discussed the current global financial crisis.

He discussed the migration of power from West to East and what China will bring to the table as an emerging leader. (But that's a bit heavy so early in the morning).

To close his lecture, he drew wisdom from another Cambridge man, Charles Darwin, and said "*only by being skeptical can we be objective, can we see ourselves critically and learn from others*".

In other words, you might be good... but you still have something to learn.

Your dune challenge...

Get skeptical about the day you've got planned. Is it structured and prioritised to offer your clients the best you have? Is it going to give your business the best ROI for your time and energies?

Think about the most successful sales day you've ever had, where your mojo was on overdrive. Is today set up to better it? Why not?

The ocean glance...

Yeo commented "*whether this crisis marks a major break in world history, we don't know yet - turning points are only seen for what they are in hindsight*". You can't predict the precise turning point of your sales results... but you can keep applying energy & disciplines to make the most when it comes!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

Lecture - *The Great Repricing*, Minister George Yeo, Cambridge University, March 27th 2009

(Thanks to my father-in-law for helping the Beach Run go high-brow!)

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Put it out there

"Give it away, give it away now..."

Red Hot Chilli Peppers

Chris Guillebeau writes blogs and online papers for an unconventional living. He just put out a manifesto called '*279 days to overnight success*'. 80 pages long and free.

3 things about his story;

- **Overnight success takes time** - & generally much longer than 279 days
- **Give something away first** - generously sharing wisdom for free earned him the endorsement of the #1 marketing blog on the planet
- **Define what success means to you** - Chris conservatively projects writing will earn him \$50K US this year - all he's after. Everything else is a bonus.

Your dune challenge...

Give a client something for free. Advice, guidance, a sample, a training session, a sticky bun, your valuable time, a way to save them valuable time, the assuredness that their saying 'no' won't destroy your relationship.

Reconcile with yourself - this takes time to pay off. Be patient. Don't stop looking and asking, but don't chase every flimsy opportunity like a desperate rabid dog.

The ocean glance...

The client comment that Chris says spurred him on - "*You help me know I'm not crazy to think the way I do*". Help a client feel sane today - might generate crazy long-term business for you!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

www.chrisguillebeau.com

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Decade of learning

"Happiness is only real when shared."

Christopher McCandless, *Into the wild*

10 things I've learnt in the last 10 years...

1. You can plan 'til the cows come home, but if you don't get off your backside, it's useless.
2. I don't always like my wife's perspective, but I benefit immensely from it.
3. The best have Achilles heels, but they understand and harness their strengths to make them less relevant.
4. Paying attention to those others bypass pays off. Think receptionists.
5. Everyone's got something that can help you & they're waiting to be asked.
6. Give first. Lots. Keep giving. Comes back.
7. Cleverness is useless in sales without likeability, and being liked takes being with people, even on the days you'd rather close the office door.
8. Everything you've ever learnt can be applied to what you're about to do.
9. Mashed potatoes, chops and tomato sauce - definitely the death row meal.
10. Head space and breathing room are the most valuable bits of real estate.

(My 10-year wedding anniversary today - also learnt that time flies! Thanks, wifey!)

Your dune challenge...

1 - thank your life partner / colleague / boss / team for putting up with you, pushing you to sell more and teaching you... ('cause you're not done yet).

2 - pull out the 10 best bits of wisdom you've garnered over the past decade. Can a client (and your sales number) benefit from them today?

The ocean glance...

If you haven't seen Sean Penn's *Into the wild*, do. All the good stuff you're working so hard to achieve can't be enjoyed in a vacuum. Share it!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Damned if you do

"Compared to what she had, a 200% improvement.

But... this is as far as she should go. We want her to stay one of us."

Toni Jones, Fashion Editor, *The Sun*

You might've joined the 200 million that visited Youtube to watch Susan Boyle's *I dreamed a dream*.

Before she sang, the audience sniggered at her fashion sense.

After, they were in raptures & her aesthetic sins were forgiven.

2 weeks on, with the world knocking at her door, she's gone and spent a couple of hundred dollars on her hair & clothes.

Now fashion commentators say '*don't go changing too much (baby)... you'll jeopardise your emotional connection with the audience.*'

Listen to the experts? The fickle crowd? Your own self esteem?

Your dune challenge...

Decide why you're doing what you're doing. What's important to you - your goals, your motivation for getting up this morning?

To build and satisfy a customer group? Be recognised as the best in your business? Hit a mighty sales target? Finish each day feeling good about yourself? Be accepted?

Before acting on the opinion of others, ask "*will this help me achieve the thing I want most?*"

The ocean glance...

If ever an audience got a stinging face-slap lesson in not judging a book by its cover... is there a client or colleague you've pigeon-holed after a rough first impression? Cut them some slack.... might just blow you away!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Flat battery in the rain

"At the end of your arms, you have two helping hands.
The first to help yourself, the second to help others."

Audrey Hepburn

Visiting Peter Lehmann winery this past gloomy Saturday, I left the car lights on. A magic lunch sheltered by an open fire was soured by a flat battery.

With the RAA man 3 hours away (seems I wasn't the only dill), we asked the cellar door lady for help. She asked around other winetasters, and a good Samaritan was kind enough to brave the rain and help me jumpstart the car.

Fantastic, but maybe more impressive - the cellar door lady followed us out with a big umbrella and held it over the kind bloke's head while he hooked up the jumper leads. When I went to offer him a bottle in thanks, the winery lady said "no, we'll take care of that, sir - we'll make sure he gets a nice bottle."

A high calibre product & brand matched by a mighty service ethic.

(Like I needed another reason to go back...)

Your dune challenge...

Ask yourself "Would each client I meet say that my service matches or exceeds the quality of what I sell? Of the brand I represent?"

Commit to a service-level jumpstart this week. One extra thank-you note to a recent purchaser. One more follow-up call to make sure everything's going smoothly for a current customer. One umbrella-holding act for a client having problems in the rain.

The ocean glance...

Had I stowed jumper leads in the car rather than relied on roadside assistance, I could have asked anyone pulling into the carpark for a hand (rather than interrupting this kind bloke's winetasting experience). The Boy Scouts are right...

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Managing consequences

"While we are free to choose our actions,
we are not free to choose the consequences of our actions."

Steven Covey, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*

Ego check is a great book discussing the importance of taking a sharp needle to your pride each time it overinflates.

Analysing the role of overconfidence in disasters like the Space shuttle Challenger explosion and Merck's Vioxx troubles, author Mathew Hayward suggests that before starting a new project in your business;

- **Study why things went wrong in previous endeavours** - sift through your (and other's) trainwrecks. Identify and eliminate any high risk steps you uncover that previously contributed to problems.
- **Test in low-cost, low-risk ways** - toe in the water before leaping in fully clothed.
- **Find a situation similar to your own** and run through a '*what would we do if it were us?*' exercise, including what you'd do when it goes pear-shaped.
- **Avoid overconfident language** like '*failure is not an option*' ('cause it is).
- Don't rule out the fact that **you might be wrong...** and be ready to flex.

Your dune challenge...

For your next sales call or an initiative you're preparing to kick off...

- identify the 'traps for young players' that felled you last time... don't repeat 'em
- test-drive your approach on a colleague or that face in the mirror
- consider the possibility it'll blow up in your face... and think about how you'll save it (your face, that is)

The ocean glance...

Hayward isn't poo poo-ing confidence - just rampant, unjustified, unchecked ego that invariably leads to tears. Back your judgment, but make sure you've got good reasons to think you'll succeed! (And be happy to admit when you're wrong!)

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

Ego check - Why executive hubris is wrecking companies and careers and how to avoid the trap.

M Hayward, Kaplan, USA, 2007.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Boyles law

$$PV = k \text{ (a constant)}$$

Boyle's law

Bunsen burners, lab coats, equations that made no sense... welcome back to High School Physics, where you might've learnt Boyle's Law of gases;

*For a given amount of gas at a fixed temperature,
pressure (P) and volume (V) are inversely proportional.*

When one goes up, the other must go down.

If you expand the area your gas has to exist in, the gas spreads out and fills up the available space (and pressure drops).

Imagine your gas is the tasks you have to do today, and that 'volume' is the time you have to do them. Give yourself heaps of time to knock the list over, and the tasks naturally want to spread out to fill the available space.

Keep the timeframe tight... pressure goes up, but amazingly you can still fit the chore list in.

(and you thought Physics had no business applications...)

Your dune challenge...

Keep your time volume tight today. Be disciplined with the tasks you have to do; don't strew them throughout the day - bunch similar tasks together in finite time brackets.

Watch the pressure gauge - don't make the schedule unrealistic (you'll blow a seal), but be wary of pressure (productivity) drops when you let time limits expand.

The ocean glance...

This law works at a constant temperature. Turn the temperature up and pressure increases anyway. When the boss / customer / economy / your own motivation turns the thermostat up, either accept the extra pressure or sequester yourself a little extra thinking, planning & reflection time to open the valve!

(Thanks to Mr Fabian, Physics teacher and sufficient motivation to pursue other career paths...)

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

The problems with going cheap

"Airlines as a whole have not netted a dime since 1903.

Price wars have destroyed value for 100 years."

Warren Buffet

Tony Cram's fantastic book *Smarter Pricing* talks about the stupidity of getting into price wars & dropping your trousers in the face of discount competition.

He says problems with price slashing & willy-nilly discounting include;

- the extra volume you'll sell never compensates for the margin you lose
- price advantages are short-lived - yours must go up and competitors will go down
- too-cheap pricing distorts customer expectations - you condition the market to think 'price first' rather than value
- it sets lower reference prices - mindsets that are very tough to push up
- you never actually defeat the competition - you just wound each other
- industry value is destroyed

Your dune challenge...

The next price objection you get, consider the implications of price-cutting. Will the short-term, smaller sale you make by discounting have a wider-reaching impact you'll forever be trying to manage?

If you've adequately communicated genuine, exceptional, sustainable value at your current price.... hold your ground.

The ocean glance...

Cram's comment about sales teams - "*Salespeople frequently overestimate the price-sensitivity of their customers.*" If you think a client is a bit toey about the \$, inject you into the price... show them a partnership with you is the best value deal they'll see this year!

(Speaking of exceptional value, Sales Cadence **FREE** for you. If you haven't yet, send me a YES! Perhaps I should have read this book before setting my price... :-)

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

Smarter Pricing, Tony Cram, Prentice Hall, Great Britain 2006.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Chicken scratch

Tough love.

On Thursday evening, a wise businessman left a message on my phone. I'd sent him an email and brochure about *Sales Cadence*. In his 60's, he runs his own successful company and is perhaps the greatest networker I've met.

His message opened with praise, positivity and a referral, but then took me to task on 2 things; my phone number wasn't in the brochure ("*how can someone make human contact?*") and my signature on the cover letter was...well... illegible chicken scratch ("*what's wrong with signing 'Troy'?*"). He signed off with a positive affirmation.

Kneejerk reaction - forget the good stuff and get cranky about the wrist-slap.

But he wouldn't have given it if he didn't care (can't pay for that kind of feedback), his points were important and he still managed to pump my tyres up.

Your dune challenge...

Take a wrist-slap from a customer or tough love from the boss as a positive - chances to learn and improve and get better results for everyone.

Then - thank them. Normally, hard sales lessons involve silence (as the customer walks on by).

The ocean glance...

Things that didn't seem that significant to me stood out like (well, you know what like) to someone else. The little stuff isn't little to everyone - and personal human touches go a long way!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day! (& thank you Marc!)

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Anita's award

"If you think you're too small to make a difference,
try going to bed with a mosquito."

Anita Roddick

Present shopping at *The Body Shop* yesterday, I spied a piece of paper stuck on the wall in the staff-only section that said 'Anita's Award'.

I got nosey and the sales lady explained it was a peer-nominated award across all Body Shop stores each month. The criteria was following late founder Anita Roddick's desire to spark 'a revolution in kindness'. The sales lady admitted she herself had won the award 2 months prior.

Kept up the nosey-ness - she said a little girl had come in to buy her Mum a gift and found she was \$1 short. Rather than turn her away or take the money from the till, the sales lady took \$1 out of her own purse and gave it to the girl.

End result - a beautiful porcelain vase for her efforts, plaudits of peers, a very happy little girl & her Mum... pretty good ROI for \$1.

Your dune challenge...

Do something small to make a difference in the life of a client, colleague or complete stranger today.

Spend less than \$1 to make a phone call, send a note, forward some information, share an idea, be a sounding board, listen to a woe or pump someone's tyres up. Not because it's good for sales, not because you'll win a vase... just because.

The ocean glance...

Anita Roddick once said "*The end result of kindness is that it draws people to you*". 2,400 + stores backs her words - share a little of your version today!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Denny Crane

"I made a decision today. I'm not dying. I love life, Alan.

They say if you keep getting excited about life,
the blood rushes to your brain better."

Denny Crane

I love *Boston Legal*. As the final season airs on Aussie TV, I'm forgiving it for a number of sins I surely wouldn't if I'd not been a long-time viewer.

The characters are now completely unbelievable, the producers are shamelessly injecting political agendas into storylines... they are milking their swansong for all it's worth.

But I still love it. The emotional connection I've built with the characters, the reliably clever dialogue and the weekly closing shot of 2 friends bonding over Scotch and cigars on the balcony.

Happy to tolerate some flaws because they've earned my loyalty through years of good service.

Your dune challenge...

Take the long term view - have you build such loyalty with longer-term clients that they'll forgive you a couple of slip-ups?

Get in credit with clients just in case your producers give you a dodgy storyline to run with. Do one thing today that will get a client saying "Troy is so valuable to me, I'll cut them some slack."

The ocean glance...

Denny Crane never lost a case. Alan Shore, best litigator in town. Seems to be when people know they're great at what they do, the way they carry themselves follows a line bridging confidence and arrogance.

A little humility keeps you on the right side of the line, but make sure your skills are good enough that you can walk it!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Uncoachable

"Every team member has an obligation to ask themselves

'Am I up to the task of continually reinventing myself to meet ever-more-demanding performance standards?'

Howard Guttman

In *Great Business Teams*, Howard Guttman looks for common threads that run through high performing business groups.

Discussing the role team members must play in coaching themselves and their peers to build high performance, he touches on 'the uncoachable'. Those people who either know it all, have no desire to change or won't take guidance or criticism. He suggests the truly uncoachable are rare, but cancerous to effective teams.

He suggests looking out for;

- stuck in the past mindsets
- vehemently defending the status quo versus listening to rationale for change
- an inability to step back and depersonalise issues
- unwilling to let go of core limiting beliefs
- inability to see past tomorrow to a potentially brighter future

Your dune challenge...

As someone trying to coach clients to make purchasing behaviour change, is there anyone you've not been able to move on the 5 areas above?

If so, are your energies better invested elsewhere? Go find coachable potential clients.

Finally, can you get over those 5 hurdles in *your own head*?

The ocean glance...

Big difference between those that need coaching and those that will embrace and thus benefit from it. Guttman's tough love - they don't want or can't accept your help, so uncoachables need to go. Prioritise your time with those willing to look for a brighter tomorrow!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

Great business teams - cracking the code for standout performance, H Guttman, Wiley, NJ 2008.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Pegging it out

"So much to see, so much to do,
so what's wrong with taking the back streets..."

Smashmouth

We all want a shortcut. Step into the front bar for a moment (Coopers Pale, please) - there's a game of darts going on where the object is to hit the numbers 1 through 20 in sequence before going to the bullseye to win.

When you've hit 9, you can shortcut your way to 20 by hitting a double 10. But if you miss it and just get a single 10, you've got to 'peg it out' and go the long way - 11, 12, 13....

The game is still winnable - just takes a little longer and a little more concentration. Flip side - it's great practice, you get to enjoy throwing a few more darts, and hey, you've really got no choice.

Your dune challenge...

The shortcut you've been gunning for - the whopping great sale - is it a certainty to come off? If so - congratulations!

If it's not locked-in, are you building enough activity, smaller prospect calls and existing client next-step conversations into May and June's plan? Plan to peg it out - don't leave your sales number hinging on the double 10.

The ocean glance...

Personal observation - serendipity seems to favour the peggers. Those who go the hard yards and at the 11th hour seem to jag the big one as well. Smaller sales opportunities x (high levels + high quality) = big stuff knocking on the door!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

3 types of appreciation

"Next to excellence is the appreciation of it."

William Makepeace Thackeray

Perhaps inspired by Hallmark moments as I scoured Mothers Day cards last week, but have been considering the word 'appreciate' as a grand-finalist in the sales-word-of-the-year stakes. 3 ways to consider 'appreciate';

- **Appreciate** - to understand, to question, to build your knowledge and an informed perspective of a clients situation and how you can help them.
- **Appreciate** - to be grateful, to thank a client, a boss, a colleague, a supplier for all they're doing to assist you
- **Appreciate** - to grow, to build value, to increase the return on investment someone makes when they choose you as a supply partner

Your dune challenge...

Apply *appreciate* to every client you'll deal with this week. Ask one more question to understand their situation, their personality, how they want to be dealt with and helped.

Thank someone for their loyalty and helping you succeed in a job you love. Finally, look for one more way to increase the value a client gets from your partnership - help their investment in you appreciate.

The ocean glance...

Understand, be thankful for and help a client get a great ROI - you'll appreciate the sales outcomes that come your way!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Be a purchasing manager

"Today, purchasers realise the importance of understanding and tapping into the talents & know-how of their suppliers."

Eberhard Scheuing Ph. D.

There's lots written about how to sell - what about how to *purchase*?

In his purchasing manager guidebook, Dr Scheuing guides professional buyers on selecting and assessing suppliers. He advocates the use of a report card template with 4 columns;

- Your different expectations of a supplier
- The relative importance of each expectation to you (adding up to 100%)
- How supplier performance rates (1 = poor to 5 = excellent)
- A final weighted rating (taking into account relative importance)

He suggests these report cards should be used to communicate expectations to suppliers, indicate relative importance, measure performance and highlight improvement opportunities.

Your dune challenge...

Assume your client uses a template like this (if nowhere else but in their head). Are you crystal clear what their expectations of you as a supplier are? Do you know what weighting they or their business give each expectation?

If they held up scorecards this morning, do you know how you'd rate? Invest some time figuring out the answers - *that's* what will drive your next action steps.

The ocean glance...

Scheuing says there are 3 ways purchasers become aware of the existence of a supplier - current published material, internal sources (supplier details on file) and personal contacts (colleagues, salespeople). Make sure you're visible in these 3 ways to even get considered!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

Value-added purchasing, E. Scheuing Ph. D., Crisp Publications, California, 1998.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Poppy's lippy

"If you ever need a crash course in coping with rejection,
I highly suggest a stint as a promotional salesperson."

Poppy King

The girl who turned her teenage dream of creating the ultimate matt lipstick into a multi-national empire, Poppy King began standing on department store floors asking "*Would you like to try Poppy lipsticks?*".

In her lessons-learnt book, Poppy says that working the coalface in days before people recognised her allowed her to collect warts'n'all customer feedback. She was horrified to hear half her clients were incorrectly applying the product (many found the colour too bold, so would water it down with Vaseline). Rather than re-educate the market, she got the labs to make this home-remedy themselves and whacked a label on it.

Doubled her product line and customer base overnight.

Your dune challenge...

The client that wants something bolted to your off-the-shelf offering or needs hot pink rather than your standard red... what can you do to accommodate them?

Where you can, flex. Where you can't, thank them for their great idea and walk it up the foodchain (if one person wants it, bet there's more). Soliciting, thanking for and communicating customer feedback is engaging - and they might even buy your bog standard offering while eagerly awaiting the software upgrade!

The ocean glance...

Now with 2 lippies in hand, Poppy would stop store customers in their tracks with "*Want to try the Coke and Diet Coke version of lipsticks?*". Clever provocative words to pique client interest - how do you do it?

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

Lessons of a lipstick queen, P. King, Atria Books, New York 2008. (Recommended)

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Conan guns and Achilles heel

The strong bit's connected to the.... weak bit.

Sales anatomy 101 - there's a tendon that runs from your impressive sales bicep muscle all the way down to your sales Achilles heel. Your greatest strength is inextricably tied to your greatest weakness.

The bubbly outgoing personality that many clients love.... puts others off for being loud & brash.

The detail-focused trainspotter catching errors others miss.... annoys many for seeming overly pedantic.

The let's-get-moving action hero.... leaving a trail of destruction and others behind as they sprint.

The let's-think-things-through delayer avoids rushed mistakes.... but achieves little quickly.

Not sure you can sever the tendon, but you *can* be aware of it and build complementary muscles to enhance bicep power & support weak heels.

(No wonder I struggled in 1st yr Anatomy...)

Your dune challenge...

Be conscious of your sales bicep - the inherent strength you possess that gets clients saying "*yes, I like dealing with them!*". Do you understand the flipside - the frustration it can cause or the subset of clients turned off by it?

Exercise the strength - do something for a client today that sums up what you excel at. (You love it... you're good at it... do it!)

Then, strap the heel - if it's forgetting to follow-up, put beeping reminders in your Blackberry. If it's inertia, give yourself a bite-size, get-out-and-see-someone challenge - phone & book 2 appointments this morning.

The ocean glance...

If Achilles had a good pair of safety boots, the wussy ankles would still be there, but no-one would've known. Can't always avoid the soft spots - but give yourself systems, structures or support to protect them!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Excavate to rebuild

"Every act of creation is first of all an act of destruction."

Picasso

Yesterday, I had my first laptop-free weeknight for as long as I can remember. Deliberately left it at work (oh, the pain & withdrawal). There's a book I'm really trying to understand, and wanted some temptation-free time to hook in.

The book was a task that kept slipping onto 'to-do-tomorrow's list. If I was going to fit it in, had to clear a space for it. Despite my angst, the world didn't explode when I didn't turn on the Toshiba for 10 hours. And I got some gold from the book.

New challenge today - excavate some more time for business planning.

Your dune challenge...

Smell the diesel from the front end loader... clear a task that's become a millstone. A habit you've formed - over-checking emails, replying to cc'ed notes, mooching around the staff kitchen. Bulldoze it - create valuable real estate for the task you know is important (but you haven't being screamed at for).

The ocean glance...

Once you've got the Caterpillar going, may as well use it to push all the similar tasks together into manageable piles. Clumping phone follow-ups together, knocking over hand-written thank-you's in one period, building email follow-up blocks... mighty time savers!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Are they always right?

"If I'd asked the consumer what they wanted,
they would have said 'a faster horse'."

Henry Ford

In their book *Death to all Sacred Cows*, 3 ad industry guys poke holes in business clichés. 'Focus on numbers and the rest takes care of itself', 'Always trust your research', and the biggie - 'The customer is always right'".

They discuss the philosophy of Danny Meyer, mega-successful New York restaurateur, who says *"I don't believe the customer is always right. I do believe it's good business to always give the customer an opportunity to be heard."*

Their point - constantly bending over to satisfy every client whim isn't a recipe for a successful business.

Your dune challenge...

Empower your team, or yourself, to politely disagree with an unreasonable customer or say no to an extreme request. Trust your business model and that your product & services have great benefits for the right people today.

Don't stop asking for feedback and being grateful for each request or suggested alteration... many times, they are right.

The ocean glance...

They mention Herb Keleher, a US airline CEO, who got wind that a disgruntled frequent flyer had written dozens of complaint letters about poor service to his staff. He ended it by writing back - *"Dear Mrs (...). We'll miss you. Love, Herb."* There's always one... other people need your attention!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

Death to all Sacred Cows, D Bernstein, B Fraser & B Schwab, Hyperion NY 2007.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

And now, the weather

A brief moment to make it count.

I had the fortune to watch the Channel 9 news filmed live on Friday night ("Make-up!"). The highly professional anchors read loudly and clearly from the teleprompters. The dapper sports reporter blended some prepared-earlier light banter with story scripts.

But most impressive was the weatherman. 2 minutes 20 seconds to cover isobars, low pressure troughs, weather warnings and give a shout-out to some school students, all while pointing to a blank green screen as he imagined where Darwin, Perth and Brisbane should be. All while the floor manager made funny hand-signals for him to follow. Without getting tongue-tied and without a teleprompt.

Hundreds of thousands of people watching... got to get it right first time. (Who said guys can't multi-task...)

Your dune challenge...

The sales conversation you'll walk into this morning - are you ready to make the mighty no-second-chances first impression? Do you know the strange side-tracks and cul-de-sac's your conversation might take, & are you prepared to hold your nerve and keep smiling when it does?

Channel the weatherman - smile and be ready to make your 2 minutes 20 seconds count for everything.

The ocean glance...

Before going live, I watched him dry run his introduction, practice-mutter the tricky bits himself and even rehearse facing different cameras.

Fair whack of everyday rehearsal to make it look that easy!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

I'd rather a no

"People talking without speaking, people hearing without listening...,
...and no-one dared disturb the sound of silence."

Simon & Garfunkel

As sales professionals, we strive to collect yes's. It means business, or someone letting you help them or empowering you to keep talking and trying.

No's aren't always great. The door just closed (for now), or they don't need or want or can't take your help in its current form.

But when you hear *nothing* - waiting for the phone to ring or the email to be answered or the customer to come back to you or you get an "*I'll think it over*" (knowing full well they won't), and all you get is silence.... that's energy sapping. No's are preferable to silence.

Aim to break silences with a yes... but at very least, get the no.

Your dune challenge...

The client you're waiting to hear back from, that's been considering your proposal for ages - don't be satisfied with silence. No news isn't good news.

Make a direct call, get in your car and go visit. Get a yes or no (and why). No joy? Write & thank them for the chance to tender and tell them you'll be there if they ever call. And assume they're gone.

The ocean glance...

To all the clients that ever said no rather than leave me hanging... thank you. Your courtesy allows me to refine what I do, focus on those that want my help and stop wondering (a whopping time-waster).

May I have the courage to do the same for those asking something of me!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

The burn healer

"A problem is a chance to do your best."

Duke Ellington

Impressive for so many reasons, Dr Fiona Wood;

- runs one of the busiest burns units in the Southern Hemisphere as well as a thriving private company
- has developed and patented a spray-on skin that cuts wound-covering time from 21 days to 5
- has 6 children that she makes lunches for and drops at school each day
- was voted as the *Most Trusted Australian* by Readers Digest
- makes time to get to the gym or run most days

She copped some medical fraternity stick for using spray-on skin before it was perfected (still a work in progress) or subjected to enough clinical trials.

Try convincing the patient who's life she just saved that they should wait.

Your dune challenge...

The slightly-flawed product you sell or your service that wants upgrading... can someone still benefit from it in its current form? Put your bias & desire for perfection aside... go show them.

The ocean glance...

When you think your plate is full and you couldn't possibly fit one more client call in at 4:45 on Friday afternoon.... think '6 lunchboxes & a run before saving a life'.

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

Sources - Wikipedia, www.abc.net.au

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Help the audience get it

No comprende.

You're presenting to a group of clients and they're nodding and you can see it's all clicking into place.... well, imagine the opposite. When you say something and vacant, quizzical, frowning looks come back. Disconnect.

US speaking coach Jerry Weissman suggests to get the conversation back on track;

- Say it differently ("*In other words,...*")
- Add depth ("*Another way to look at this is ...*")
- Give an example ("*For instance, ...*")
- Explain ("*What this means is*")
- Provide evidence ("*Let me show you the research...*")
- Show value ("*This is important because...*")

(I think he missed one... ask the question ("*Does that make sense?*"))

Your dune challenge...

Next time your benefit statement produces a furrowed client brow, try rephrasing it. Translate it into words or examples or anecdotes they'll be familiar with (it's easy to get stuck in your own special business-speak).

All else fails, ask them what they don't get!

The ocean glance...

Weismann says aim for head nods - "*It means they've got it*" (or are trying hard to). Reading client body language while speaking means fracturing your attention. To do both well, you better be fluent in what you're discussing!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

Gauging audience reactions, L Gschwandtner with J Weissman, *Selling Power*, April 2009.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Aftertaste

Sugar on the porridge, lemon in the milk.

There are ways and ways of delivering messages...

With 10 rarely-get-together friends recently, we had an event at a trendy pizza-wine bar. Fun and laughs and noise - someone wanted to speak, so we tapped our wine glasses with the knife. The waitress leaned over poker-faced and said "*Could you not do that please, they're very expensive.*"

Same week, a girl on our street had her 21st birthday. 5 days out, she letter-box dropped every house within 6 doors and politely explained the party details. She super-nicely begged our indulgence until 1am. It actually wasn't loud (bit too quiet really, hope they had fun), but her consideration meant we'd have cut her some slack.

Great experience marred by poor message delivery; potentially bad experience tempered by the right tone.

Your dune challenge...

When you have to tell a client to stop using your product that way before it breaks or that they'll have to pay for add-on's to a service they're otherwise enjoying... do it nicely. Change behaviours without being a buzzkill.

When the situation is bleak - backorders, product failures, price hikes or things-are-about-to-get-ugly... - deliver the message with some super-nice. Soften the blow and earn some indulgence.

The ocean glance...

For those that started Beach Running in January, this is your 100th trip along the sand. Thank you - I hope you're enjoying and benefiting from the sales exercise! Keep running at your optimal cadence - your customers need you to.

(Hey, feel free to invite a friend along for company...)

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Juicy

"The plans for the next 5 years are to establish Boost Juice as one of the most famous and loved brands in the world."

Janine Allis, Boost Juice Founder

Janine Allis started the Boost Juice Bar franchise in Adelaide in 2000, and today has 189 stores serving wheatgrass shots and Mango smoothies.

In a 2004 interview, Janine shared thoughts about her success;

- **On franchising** - *"Our franchise partners are brilliant. Occasionally they forget that they're in their own business and lack accountability. But that's only 2%."*
- **On managing time** - *"I'm into lists. I have non-negotiable tasks. My 9:30am meetings happen - even if the Queen is here, she has to wait."*
- **If she had her time over** - *"Wouldn't change anything, because I had to learn some lessons to be where I am now."*

Perhaps the best - *"Have the power to blame yourself for everything - if everything is your fault, you can fix it."*

Your dune challenge...

Apply Janine's philosophy of personal accountability to your May sales number. Is it where you want to be? Are you sticking to the non-negotiables on your task list to get as many people as possible enjoying the benefits of your offering?

4 days to turn over rocks to make it happen. 4 days to apply hard lessons in a positive way. 4 days to pre-plan June's result. The Queen will wait.

The ocean glance...

Janine started her business by bringing a US juice bar concept to Australia. The wheel was invented - she just tweaked it for a new audience. Somewhere, someone's doing something clever that might help you grow customers... are you looking for it?

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

Female Entrepreneurs, Leiza Clark, New Holland, Sydney 2006.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Milk runs

"I just wanna be close to you..."

Maxi Priest

Keeping a client partnership alive means staying in touch. Establishing a 'milk run' - regular contacts to say hi, ask questions, deliver solutions or just be seen to be there. Some milk-run support ideas;

- **Use recall tools** - Outlook calendar reminders, a spreadsheet with next-contact prompts, a 12-month call plan - who gets your attention today?
- **Book the next one** - as you finish a client conversation, get agreement on and diarise your next contact.
- **Database trawling sessions** - your mobile phone address book, your email contact list, finance department records of everyone who spent with you in the past 5 years - make regular times to review the list.
- **The perfect client** - Each month, take your product or service & define what its 'perfect client' would look like. Who do you already know that looks like this?
- **One-a-day** - go bite-size, pick one person you haven't spoken to in months & call them. One every working day.

Your dune challenge...

Take the sporadic out of your contact strategy and establish or refine a milk run. Define the key clients you should stay close to regularly, even if they don't always have an order or immediate problem to solve.

Pick up the phone, call someone you've been meaning to for a while - book a catchup. You'll enjoy it, you'll learn something and you'll kickstart a new habit.

The ocean glance...

Some like milk delivered every day, others once a month. Even if there's no money sitting on the porch, keep calling and communicating until told otherwise. Never know when rels are visiting and their milk order goes up!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Social power

"Sometimes I dream, that he is me... "

Nike's *Like Mike* campaign

Manchester University Professor of Consumer Behaviour Michael Solomon says many of our consumer choices are heavily influenced by what others do. He says it's due to the social power others wield over us, and categorises this power into 6 types;

- **Referent power** - where people admire you & try to copy you
- **Information power** - where you know something others don't (but would like to)
- **Legitimate power** - where you have authority over others
- **Expert power** - where your understanding of a niche area is valued
- **Reward power** - where you have carrots (prizes or your approval)
- **Coercive power** - where you have a stick or threats

Your dune challenge...

Consider the power you have in a customer relationship. *Referent* - do they like you enough to want to follow you? *Information* - do they see you as a conduit to valuable updates? *Expert* - do they trust your opinion? *Reward* - are they clear on WIIFT? And *coercive* - if all else fails, do they understand the implications of *not* progressing?

The ocean glance...

Testimonials, case studies and a strong track record are powerful sales tools. Like all power, they have the potential to be abused. Do a power usage audit before your next sales conversation!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The truth about what customers want, M. Solomon, FT Press, New Jersey 2009. Recommended.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Standing out in a field of grapes

"We're always looking for ways to stimulate the trade."

Chester Osborn

I got to hear Chester Osborn, colourful chief winemaker at d'Arenberg, speak on Wednesday night. As the Australian wine industry seeks to shift its unsustainable international reputation as a low-cost-high-volume-producer, Chester gave 20c on how they do it at d'Arry's;

- **Make what clients want** - the 75% of Chester's market that live outside Australia want fine, integrated wines (not big hot reds), so that's what he passionately tries to make
- **Keep creating and trying** - d'Arenberg constantly bring out new blends (35 and growing) to keep existing clients interested, talking, wondering what's next
- **The wine is critical... but not enough** - quality product is the entrance fee, but branding it with stories, personality, something fun and interesting... that's what gets clients intrigued enough to try (then fall in love with) the product

Your dune challenge...

Are you the sales partner your client has always dreamed of? Constantly trying and creating and asking about new service and support initiatives to keep them engaged and satisfied?

Do you put some personality into what you bring them? Find a way to give a client a colourful moment backed with some high-calibre Troy service.

The ocean glance...

Chester is about to launch a clothing line (loud & colourful) and, in the tradition of iconic winery architecture in Spain, is designing a massive 'Rubiks cube' building in the middle of their vineyard. Push the boundaries... back it with quality... but make some noise!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Business twitter

"Education's purpose is to replace an empty mind with an open one."

Dorothy Nevill

At the prompt of a couple of clever blokes, I'm slowly climbing the mental wall I've put around *Twitter* (the e-tool that tells your friends what you sprinkled on your cereal). Still think it's used for superficial inane look-at-me reasons, but am coming to appreciate other applications. It offers;

- **Free communication of real-time highlights** - what you've learnt, think or is happening in your world
- **Opt-in audience** - it clearly defines & makes visible your interested parties
- **Succinct** - 140-character limit forces you to cut waffle
- It feels **unfiltered**, more personal, a cross between a text and a blog (well, personal-ish)
- **Gets you with the program** - if the SA Premier, Aussie Prime Minister, US President and Sir Richard Branson see value in tweeting...

Still got reservations, but giving tweeting and listening to select others a go - might develop word-culling habits and hold my own with early-adopters!

Your dune challenge...

Peer over a mental wall you've put up. A client you think isn't worth pursuing, a sales aid you don't like, a technology you've avoided, a networking contact you've thought wasted Oxygen. Give them a go - call it *Sales Broccoli* - don't bag it 'til you've tried it.

The ocean glance...

If for no other reason than gaining street cred with a 15-year-old, take 5 minutes to learn about Twitter. Even better, follow me for a bit (www.twitter.com/42msr). I'll be your crash-test dummy - happy for you to learn from my mistakes! (PS Just saw the SA Premier is now following my tweets... never know who's listening...)

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Home ground advantage

The location advantage

Sporting teams crave home-ground advantage. Familiar turf, spirit-lifting crowds, playing where you practice... the Adelaide Crows even have a '19th man flag' they raise on game day, representing the extra player their home crowd represents.

Try walking out of a winery cellar door after tasting and not buying anything - the sense of obligation you feel often sees you pulling your credit card out.

We want to reciprocate when others have us in their homes or premises and show us hospitality. Retailers understand home ground advantage, but you don't need a fancy showroom to dish out a heapin' helping of some hospitality.

(Beverly Hillbilly style, that is...)

Your dune challenge...

Factory tour, presentation in your boardroom, host a training session, muffin morning, under-the-roller-door beers & bbq on a Friday, even taking a prospective client to a 3rd party reference site you're proud of and buying them a cuppa. Doesn't have to cost a bomb - try 1 this week.

The ocean glance...

Before inviting clients to your home away from home, stand out front & look at your business 'welcome mat' with fresh eyes. You walk past that tatty sign or messy pile of magazines in reception every day... what will a new client think? Tidy time - create the right first impression!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Problem resolution and loyalty

Sort it out and they stick around.

In *What's the secret to providing a world-class customer experience*, health spa chain owner John Di Julius discusses a customer satisfaction research project, "Five things we learned from talking to 100 million people". (Visit www.servicemanagement.com for a free copy)

Researchers found that, of customers who reported problems to a supplier, only 35% were highly satisfied with how the problem was resolved. However, 84% of those who were satisfied with the problem resolution said they'd come back and shop again. Comparison - only 71% of people who hadn't experienced any problems said they'd shop there again.

Fix an issue, and you create even more client loyalty than you get from customers who've enjoyed smooth sailing.

Your dune challenge...

Hunt for customer dissatisfaction. A luke-warm last conversation you had with a client, a niggling background issue you sense they're not chuffed about, a failure to return your calls. What's going on and what can you do to fix it? Find and turn unhappy campers around - they're stickier than the squeak-less wheels!

The ocean glance...

Di Julius is critical of most CRM systems, saying "*what's the point of collecting customers information if you don't use it - a service opportunity wasted!*" The birthdays, kids names, pet projects, service anniversaries... if you know about them, show that you care enough to remember!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

What's the secret to providing a world-class customer experience, J Di Julius III, Wiley, NJ, 2008.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Will it blend?

Don't just tell 'em... show 'em.

Visit www.willitblend.com. There you'll see Blendtec CEO Tom Dickson putting items like i-phones, golf balls, Coke cans and light bulbs into his patented *Total Blender*. The question to the audience - will it blend?

It always does. The product works, and it's a fun & engaging way to appeal to the can't-look-away-from-train-wreck's sense we all have.

Have you got the courage to put your product... better yet, your brand of personal service, through its most rigorous paces in front of millions?

Your dune challenge...

Apply the blender test to the value *you* bring to a client relationship. When the sharp blades come out (price objections, complaints, payment delays, busy signals, last-minute requests), do you have the sales plexiglass to deal with the shrapnel?

Try spotting your weakest service point, then decide 1 thing you'll do to toughen it.

The ocean glance...

If you're confident there's something truly industry-best about what you offer a client, find a creative way to showcase it. Don't just tell people - show them your blender in action! (Tom's 30s Youtube clips sell a loooottta product).

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Wooing

"But lately something's changed, it ain't hard to define.
Jessie's got himself a girl, and I wanna make her mine..."

Rick Springfield

To grow your business, you either need to generate more sales from current clients, find clients who aren't buying from anyone yet, or get them across from a competitor.

Tips for wooing clients over;

- **Let them know you exist** - they can't defect to you if they've never heard of you
- **Let them know you want to help** - *"If I can assist, I'd love to..."*
- **Give a sneak preview** - *"Here's an example of what we do / what our customers are doing / enjoying / saying.."*
- **Be respectful** - *"I understand you are currently being looked after by supplier X... if there's anything you need that they can't help you with..."*
- **Stay in voyeuristic view** - best way to tempt a mutiny... demonstrate your amazing service by delivering it to your current customers, over and over again.

Your dune challenge...

Pick 3 clients you'd love to have, but you know are currently being looked after by a competitor. Approach them for a chat - your in might be *'keeping them abreast of new developments in your industry'*.

Show desire and ways you can help while respecting their current supplier choice. Position yourself as a highly desirable Plan B, and stay in touch - you just raised the bar for the incumbent.

The ocean glance...

While existing clients fund your business today, growing your client stable is vital. Because you have more help to offer; because you want the rewards extra business will bring; and because your competitors will pinch a few off *your* list.

Don't give clients a reason to entertain defecting thoughts!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Stranger kindness

"Nice has an image problem.

But nice is the toughest 4-letter word you'll ever hear.

Nice makes more money."

Linda Kaplan Thaler, CEO, Kaplan Thaler Advertising Group

Searching for a workshop venue last week, I got a cook's tour of a city conference facility. The venue was slick, and the sales manager guiding me was smart, professional and friendly.

As we toured, there was a man in the passage looking perplexed. The sales manager & I were deep in conversation, but glimpsing him, she excused herself and very politely asked if she could help. Rather than point or give him directions to the room he was trying to find, she asked me *"Mr Forrest, would you mind if I excused myself for just a moment? I'd like to show this gentleman to his conference room. Thank you so much."*

My words don't do it justice, but the courtesy and niceness she showed the lost man (and me) was, well, nice.

Never know who's judging you by how they see you treating others...

Your dune challenge...

The person at the car park toll booth. The telesales person that bothers you in the middle of dinner. The receptionist trying to give you the brush off. The colleague calling for some time-consuming help. The frustrating client giving you 3 times as much grief as revenue.

Speak nicely to them today. (Please?)

The ocean glance...

Nice isn't just *what* you do - it's *how* you do or say it. As sales professionals, our words are a big part of how we share our brand of help. Roomful of mirrors time - are the words coming out nicely, even on bad hair days?

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Shifting your line

"Training is a waste of time if you don't have goals."

Samantha Riley

Last week, former World Champion Tennis player Mark Woodford interviewed Samantha Stosur. She'd just become the first Aussie female to make the French Open Finals in over two decades. (Lost, but great effort!)

He said "*Sam, your goal had been to make the world's top 40 players this year. Congratulations - you've now done that. Time to reset your goals?*".

She'd barely caught her breath... enjoyed a fleeting moment in the sun... and now the focus is on where her next high jump bar will sit. No standing still.

Your dune challenge...

The personal targets you'd set yourself for 2009 - as the 1/2 way point comes into view, review your progress. Are the full year goals still realistic? Already surpassing where you wanted to be?

Reaffirm or reset your full year goals - make them challenging but achievable. Critically, make sure they're personally important to you.

The ocean glance...

Goals can be outcome-focused (*where* you want to go) or process-focused (*how* you want to get there). Choose one type, choose both, but have *some* guidelines to keep you honest and not drifting aimlessly!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Apple inspiration

"Innovation has nothing to do with how many R&D dollars you have.

When Apple came up with the Mac, IBM was spending at least
100 times more on R&D. It's not about the money."

Damian Kernahan, Proto Partners Innovation

Amantha Imber, PhD and Head Inventionologist at Inventium (real job title), talks about a study that shows the ineffectiveness of creativity.

Researchers put 2 similar groups of people in different rooms and asked them to come up with as many uses they could think of for a brick. During the exercise, one group was exposed to the Apple logo; the other to the IBM logo.

They found the Apple logo group did significantly better at generating creative brick-use ideas. They surmised that, because most people associate Apple with creativity, our creative thought processes fire when we think of the brand.

Long bow to draw? Maybe. Worth trying? What do you have to lose?

Your dune challenge...

Trying to come up with a creative new service or sales approach to set your business apart? Expose yourself to creative stimuli.

Research a creative business, run your sales meeting in the Art Gallery, do something out of routine, read a creative book or magazine, watch *The New Inventors*. Just do something different to yesterday.

The ocean glance...

Apple are the businessworld benchmark for creativity and innovation. But it was Thomas Watson of IBM that said "*Nothing happens around here until someone sells something.*" Take a leaf from both today!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

"The environment of creativity", Dr A Imber, *Fast Thinking*, Autumn 2009.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Borrowing from clever people

An assistant from the audience, please...

At a workshop on Tuesday, I watched Paul Birt, Executive Officer from Charterhouse Advertising, demonstrate why you shouldn't leave the fire doors in a multi-story building stairwell wedged open.

Won't spoil the magic, but it involved 2 volunteers, orange juice and straws. It was a creative & powerful physical depiction of a principle he could have just talked about. Paul borrowed it from someone else, who no doubt did the same.

Words can work, but when backed by a memorable demo, the message cuts through.

Your dune challenge...

Give a client a creative demonstration of how you might help them. Put the widget in their hands and let them play with the mechanism; share a real-life study of a happy client on video; draw a picture of your process.

If your service or concept is tricky to do this with, use an "It's a bit like" analogy - plant a creative, memorable comparison in their head.

The ocean glance...

Unless the demonstration method is patented, borrow elements from it. Creativity is great, but if there's a proven effective sales approach that fits nicely, try it!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

Thanks Paul!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Something or nothing

One for the road.

Over the past couple of years, I've been fortunate to coach over 100 sales professionals, from forty-year industry veterans to brand spanking newbies. Some kicked amazing goals, others not quite got where they wanted.

The bucket of lessons I've learnt from them, another time. But the one thing that binds the most successful... they all *do something*. They have a go.

Late Friday or on cold Monday mornings, they pick up a phone to book a cold-call appointment that scares them, or follow-up with a client they don't think has much to offer immediately, or drive the extra 5km to make one more call.

The alternative to doing something - do nothing. That's a place where the phone doesn't ring. Doing nothing today doesn't seem to be an option for the successful.

Your dune challenge...

Do something today that you're tempted to let slide.

Call a prospective client you might be able to help (but keep procrastinating on). Show an extra product or service to your best client that you've never bothered with. Send the 5 hand-written thank-you notes that the training course told you were so important (but just never seem to happen).

Just don't do nothing.

The ocean glance...

You're not guaranteed to get the result you want when you do something. But you are guaranteed of a result if you do nothing. The result? Nothing!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Happy sandwich bar

"A little ray of sunshine..."

Axiom

A limo driver, a Greek orthodox priest and a sales coach walk into a coffee shop... no punchline, just an experience I had on Friday.

Entering a little coffee shop for the first time, I smiled at how good the place made me feel;

- **Bubbly** - the owner, busy making cappuccinos, was loud, friendly and made me feel like I was visiting his home
- **Bright** - the owner's son (final year graphic design student) had created a light-filled warm space with edgy, consistent and colourful branding everywhere you looked (orange gingerbread men with bites taken out)
- **Backed by quality product** - great coffee, cakes looked scrumptious - the whole package clicked

The limo driver hung out at the counter drinking coffee and chatting; the priest gave me a smiling nod (that's gotta be good juju), and for a moment, I felt like a local. Nice.

Your dune challenge...

Give a client a light-filled, warm, high quality service experience today. Make them feel like a local in your world - part of your team. Check your smile and the sunshine in your voice on what might otherwise be a gloomy day for them.

The ocean glance...

The take-away coffee cups, the bags of coffee beans, the hats and t-shirts they sold - all carried their unique, professional-looking branding. This is for a tiny sandwich bar with 5 tables.... is everything you send a client clearly and consistently badged?

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Hieroglyphics

Draw a picture.

A useful method for group problem solving is to put all the information in a central place, where everyone can see it.

Detectives piecing evidence together stick crime scene photos on a wall. Doctors trying to diagnose tricky cases write the symptoms & test results on a board. Sales teams brainstorming new approaches or SWOT analysis go through reams of butchers paper.

Things sometimes look different on the wall. Let your eyes help your brain by drawing the problem differently.

Your dune challenge...

Take a tricky situation (difficult client, product you're struggling to get passionate about, lack of ideas about great service initiatives) and go to the whiteboard or flipchart in your boardroom.

By yourself or with colleagues, write down the problem - try getting to root causes. Then, write up the ideas you've had to deal with it. Stand back, view your art, and see if any links or fresh perspectives appear.

The ocean glance...

Try doing the 9-letter word puzzle in the newspaper. Somedays the word jumps off the page, other times you're stumped. Try redrawing the letters in another order. A different way of presenting the same material can trigger great new ideas!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Critical thinking

"I cannot teach anybody anything. I can only make them think."

Socrates

Fantastic article for sales professionals in yesterday's *EducationNow* about the father of critical thinking, Socrates. The Socratic method is a form of questioning used to help people find answers for themselves. Some examples of Socratic questions;

- **Source** questions - "Where did you get that idea?"
- **Evidence** questions - "Why do you feel that way?"
- **Assumption** questions - "Do I understand you correctly?"
- **Clarification** questions- "Can you give me an example?"
- **Consequence** questions - "If that happened, what would happen as a result?"
- **Viewpoint** questions - "What do you think is an alternative?"

Where you can, ask rather than tell.

Your dune challenge...

Today, there'll be a moment you're tempted to jump in and blurt out an idea or answer for a client. Hold back. Can you ask a Socratic question that helps a client understand or generate their own conclusion without you telling them?

We're more likely to run with ideas we generate ourselves - help a client find their own answer.

The ocean glance...

The gauntlet sales professionals run by asking rather than telling, is sounding patronising. Take comfort - you don't really know the right answer, because you don't have all the facts about the client's situation. Holding back and asking one more question is the right thing to do for both of you!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Put it out there

"A good scare is worth more to a man than good advice."

Edgar Watson Howe

I did something that scared the pants off me yesterday. I sent a copy of my recent 'what customers want' whitepaper to about 200 members of a business group I'm involved with. Lots of them I haven't met.

It was scary because it's a chance for them to judge me. Because they might think it's stupid. Because there's no going back.

My reality check - they're judging me anyway (if they even know I exist). Now they can make an informed choice, based on something I'm proud of. And if they don't like my style, well, I probably can't help them anyway.

Your dune challenge...

Scare yourself today - put something out there. An idea you've wanted to tell the team about, a big-fish client you've held back from approaching, a string of words you've thought about using in a sales chat (but been afraid to try).

You're not getting any younger, and they're not cutting your sales target - have a crack.

The ocean glance...

Emails from recipients of the paper have started coming in, and they've been really positive. I'm sure it won't be everybody's cup of tea, but it's positive noise for my business, at a time of year when people are thinking hard about their investments. Make sure you're reminding clients what's special about you!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Fun rituals

"Here comes FUN!"

Homer J.

Some Friday-morning-and-the-year's-almost-half-over thinking music...

Ian Hutchinson, founder of *Life by Design* and *The Work Life Project*, works with leading companies to help them address the topical work-life balance issue. In his *52 strategies* book, Ian highlights the shift from starchy staid workplaces to more jovial, colourful spaces like you see in ad agencies, funky firms and the Googleplex. (Pass me a beanbag?)

He says that creating 'fun rituals' in your business, as simple as casual Fridays or starting sales meetings with a joke, is vital to keeping people happy and fresh in otherwise stressful jobs.

What's 'fun' about where you work? What are you doing to get some smiles going?

Your dune challenge...

Create a fun ritual in your business. Tuesday morning donut day. A 'name your favourite...' exercise at each team meeting. A whiteboard with a topical movie quote each week (like the signs churches have). Play 'Business Celebrity Heads'. Take every second sales meeting to a quirky offsite location.

OK, my creative juice is a little thin this morning... you come up with one! You're at work an awfully big part of your life... make sure its enjoyable!

The ocean glance...

Don't just limit it to your colleague team - include your 'client team'. What brand of fun can you build into your dealings with them? Yes, your solutions and partnership is very serious.... but generating smiles doesn't have to tarnish your professionalism!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

52 strategies to work life balance, I Hutchinson, Pearson, Sydney 2003.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Physio entrepreneur

"My 'pitch' is that engaging TPC reduces risk, increases productivity,
increases profit and the viability of your facility."

Tristan White, Founder, TPC

TPC - The Physio Co. - is a Melbourne company delivering physiotherapy services to the aged care sector.

Founder Tristan White identified a market gap. He thought physio service provision to aged care facilities was fragmented, so built a business to get more physios visiting elderly patients every month. They'll deliver over 40,000 consultations this year.

Look at White's sales message. Are you this clear in pitches to *your* clients?

Your dune challenge...

Take the fanciest feature of your product, service or concept, and translate it to something as simple as 'reduces risk', 'increases productivity', 'saves you money' or 'makes you money'.

In your next client conversation, don't assume they'll make the mental jump to these simple end-benefits themselves. Talk them to it.

The ocean glance...

On hiring the right people, White says *"It's a lesson I learned very quickly; you need professionals who really do like working with elderly people!"* If you don't love serving your customer group 8+ hours a day... get a new customer group, or get a new profession!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Know your numbers

"No-one would bother to use advertising if they could talk to all their prospects face-to-face."

Morris Hite

I spoke with a finance industry consultant last week. He told me that 30 years of running his business has taught him he must see at least two existing or potential clients face-to-face each day to achieve the revenue goals he sets.

15 years ago when I started selling pharmaceuticals, my employer required me to see a minimum of six doctors every day. On average, that's the visit number they knew achieved sales targets.

The other number they told us about - \$250. That's what it cost the company per face-to-face customer visit. Each conversation with a client needed to generate at least that much in revenue for the business to be viable.

Do you understand your client face-to-face numbers?

Your dune challenge...

Take your full year sales target and divide it by 52. Now take the average number of clients you see each week. Finally, divide the first number by the second. That's how much you need to generate per client visit to achieve what you've been hired to do.

Number scares the pants off you? Then either see more potential purchasers, or make sure every conversation *really* counts.

The ocean glance...

The numbers don't tell the full story, but they are a simple, tangible measure to keep you focused on having enough conversations with those who can grow your business. Quality makes the conversations count, but don't ignore quantity!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Tact

"Tact is the art of making a point without making an enemy."

Isaac Newton

If you've sat in a meeting with someone who is loud, opinionated and ill-informed, you know how hard it is to not roll your eyes and yell 'move on!'

Professional meeting facilitator Frances Micale suggests being tactful to deal effectively with people without offending them. Her suggestions for tact;

- **Think before you speak** - consider the possible impact of your words on all parties as you collate your thoughts.
- **Be clear about what you're saying** - be open, direct, but never hurtful.
- **Be solution-focused** - "*We've discussed that the path we're heading down isn't positive - what can I do to help?*"
- **Express observations with humility** - preface your opinions with words like "*It seems to me that...*"
- **Don't blurt out what you want to say** - even if 90% of the group is thinking it, resist the urge. It will only alienate someone.

Your dune challenge...

Apply tact in dealing with someone you disagree with today. If they say it's black, consider an approach like "*I understand you believe that. It's my professional opinion that it's white. Let me show you why ...*".

Longer-winded than "*No, it's white!*". But more likely to retain or progress a friendship.

The ocean glance...

Sales professionals are often tactful with external clients. But do you apply the same tact when a colleague drops the ball, or your boss tells you about a backorder problem, or marketing says "*We've had this crazy new promo idea...*"?

These people are just customers in different clothing... be tactful!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

Meetings made easy, F Micale, Entrepreneur Press, USA, 2004.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Tick tock

"Don't say you don't have enough time.

You have exactly the same number of hours in the day as

Helen Keller, Pasteur, Michelangelo, Mother Theresa, Da Vinci, Thomas Jefferson
and Albert Einstein."

H. Jackson Brown.

If you're reading this bright and early (morning!), you've got around 32 working hours left until the 2009 halfway mark*.

32 hours to polish the hard work you've done over the past 5 & 3/4 months. To review your progress, refine your plan and take a running start into July. Four areas I'd suggest are worthy of your attention in the next 32 working hours;

- **The non-negotiables** - the just-got-to-be-done-or-the-world-explodes.
- **The support of clients who've earned and paid for it** - don't forget those that got you here (and are your best future business supporters).
- **The lowest-hanging sales fruit** - the number hasn't been reached yet; don't bypass what's lying on the table.
- **The longer-term investment** - you want to be reaping sales rewards years from now, and your activities today can help it. Where? What?

* perhaps a few more hours if you're truly serious about a great June finish.

Your dune challenge...

Map out the next 32 business hours, ensuring you are crystal clear about what's most important from each of the above 4 areas.

Aim to finish the month busily, and get a nose in front come July 1st.

The ocean glance...

There's always a sales tomorrow... but you never get today back. Leave the regrets to Frank Sinatra - don't sit at the end of '09 just a whisker short of your target and say "*If only I'd found one more person to help...*". Today. On your bike!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Flat pack expectations

"Our idea is to serve everybody, including people with little money."

Ingvar Kamprad

I broke a promise to myself on the weekend and visited IKEA for the first time (assembled lots of their furniture, but phobic about department stores... shiver). It's remarkable, and you understand why Mr Kamprad (the IK in IKEA) is worth US \$34 Billion.

The restaurant, the kids play area, the clever way you can't get out of the shop without seeing eeeverything... what caught my eye though were signs explaining the store philosophy. One said "*Why can't I find a shop assistant when I need them?*", and then explained the cost saving to you by having fewer staff to assist.

Your service needn't be fawning, but customers need to have clear upfront expectations, and you better communicate the benefits of your policy to them!

Your dune challenge...

Do your customers have clearly defined service expectations of *you*? Do they really understand the benefits your personal service philosophy offers them?

Today, clearly tell a customer the level of service you intend to provide to them, and show how this will improve their lives.

The ocean glance...

IKEA makes you build everything yourself, but their assembly instructions are world class (if you've ever put cheap DIY stuff together, you know...).

If there's something around your offering that you make customers do themselves, it's a savvy future sales strategy to make sure they feel super confident doing it!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Culture-changing stories

"Did you hear about what my colleague did?..."

Peter Bregman consults with businesses to help them change culture.

If a corporate culture is unfriendly, unsustainable, unsupportive or un-somethingpositive - Bregman suggests there's only one proven effective way to change it.

Stories.

The stories that staff and management share about a business, inside and outside its four walls, will define, perpetuate and ingrain a culture. So to change the culture, change the stories by;

- Do dramatic story-worthy things representing the culture you'd like
- Find others doing dramatic story-worthy things you like... and tell their story

Your dune challenge...

Something about the culture of your business you don't like? Do something positive, drastic and uncultural. Makes sure others see it so they can tell stories about it.

Find a cultural role model - business, competitor, customer, supplier - and talk about what, why and how they do it. Permeate their culture into your team.

The ocean glance...

The right culture turns milk into yoghurt; the wrong one... rancid. Don't wait for the boss to drive cultural change... start at your level today!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The best way to change corporate culture, P Bregman, Harvard Business Blogs, 25/6/09 (via Twitter)

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Chef Cadence

"ANYONE can cook!"

Chef Gusteau, *Ratatouille*

Welcome to July - the premiership sales month.

As the uber-fit *Sales Cadence* peloton moves off today, box watchers around the land are hooked to Ten's *Masterchef* - a recipe for engaging viewers.

Seven hot sales lessons from those sweating in the pressurised TV kitchen;

- **Know what you're striving for** - dishes, style, reputation, your signature... define it clearly.
- **Push yourself** - no-one wants pedestrian cuisine or passionless grub.
- **Plan** - ingredients, tools, order, layout on the plate... everything.
- **Time management** - is *your* responsibility. And impacts *your* success.
- What you produce needs to **look the business**. Induce me to try.
- What you produce needs to **taste sublime**. It's what I'm paying for.
- It needs to be reproducible at the highest level - **Chef cadence**.

'Cause you want the punters back tomorrow night.

Your dune challenge...

Put a fresh apron on, review the menu, and get ready to induce and delight a ravenous crowd. Hungry for cost-cutting solutions, profit-generating applications, better-than-I've-ever-had service and someone who just gives a damn.

The ocean glance...

A Masterchef judge pet gripe - messy workstations. Clutter is distracting and inefficient. A new fin year, a chance to clean up a habit or sales approach you've let get sloppy. Start the back end of '09 as you'd like to end it - tidy and flying!

(And I made that premiership sales month bit up... but if it gets you moving a *bit* quicker...)

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Common sense

"Despite all the smarts floating around, a lot of dumb things get done."

Fergus O'Connell

Fergus O'Connell is a mathematical physicist and global authority on project management. In his cracking book *Simply Brilliant - the competitive advantage of common sense*, O'Connell strips business success back to basics.

One of his 7 commonsense principles is "Things don't get done if people don't do them" (get outta town). O'Connell believes people don't maliciously set out not to do things, but might be victims of;

- **Confusion** - they didn't know what they were supposed to do or the consequences of not doing it
- **Overcommitment** - they knew it was important but didn't have the time
- **Inability** - they didn't have the right expertise, experience or training

Commonsense solution - make sure people know what they have to do, free them up to do it and make sure they know how.

Your dune challenge...

Help a client make a commonsense decision to partner you today. Ensure they're crystal clear about what you want them to do and how it will help them.

Make it easy and time-efficient so they run out of reasons to procrastinate. Then - walk them through exactly how to take the next step.

The ocean glance...

Commonsense in your sales territory - if you don't go visit that client today, show that new product, demonstrate that new service, ask for that referral... no-one else will. Every job needs someone to do it... know your jobs for today!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

Simply Brilliant - The competitive advantage of common sense, F. O'Connell, Pearson, UK, 2008.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Bruno

"Fashion saves more lives than doctors."

Bruno

Comedian Sacha Baron Cohen's latest incarnation, Austrian Fashionista *Bruno*, offends and shockingly delights in equal measures. Film critic Vicky Roach's review of his new film highlighted a couple of reasons for SBC's continued success in getting bums on theatre seats.

- He goes to **extreme lengths** to excel at his craft - risking being shot by homophobic rednecks and run out of town by Hassidic Jews in Israel - he goes further than any other comedian dares
- He gets **specialist advice** on local laws before going into a region and **builds escape routes** should it go wrong
- He has **limits** - the Latoya Jackson interview got scrapped
- Every scene he tries to create **has a point**, and the people he targets must be **worthwhile**

Your dune challenge...

Do you go to greater lengths to find, recruit, satisfy, delight, retain and generate referrals from a customer than your competitors? Why not?

Get Bruno with your next sales call. Seek pre-call guidance, plan your fallback position, know your limits and be clear on the point of your conversation - is this a worthwhile investment of your and their time?

The ocean glance...

The wedged lederhosen may net him even more than Borat (US\$260M)... Ich thinks it's nice work for a few laughs. But you've got to go out on the edge for that kinda reward... ready to go further than competitors to service clients?

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

Sacha's taste sensation, V Roach, The Advertiser, 2/7/09.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Speak up or don't complain

How can they fix it if they don't know it's a problem?

There's this guy I was hurriedly introduced to a few months ago. In the few brief meetings we've had since, he's greeted me by a different name each time. "Hi, Tony... Toby... Terry.... (never Troy)".

He's either not quite all there, or more likely, he doesn't remember my name, other than it begins with T. I've dropped the ball on this one by not correcting him the first time (why didn't I? A mystery). Now it'll be really awkward when I do.

No-one likes it when someone hasn't taken the trouble to remember your name, and given *he knows* he doesn't know my name, he could ask. But - it's my problem and my fault for not telling him I'M NOT TOBY.

Your dune challenge...

Someone is doing something that bothers you that you haven't yet corrected. A client incorrectly using what you sold them. A colleague over imposing on your good nature. A boss doing something that you know isn't right.

Shoulder responsibility - tell them. Nicely, and if necessary, explain why it's a problem doing what they're doing. Be solution-focused - show them a better way; give them an alternative.

The ocean glance...

I'm morbidly curious about what he'll call me next time (Trent? Theodore?). But if I don't correct him, one day he'll find out the truth, and he'll be miffed because I let him carry on doing the wrong thing when I could have helped out. Stem someone's incorrect or bothersome behaviour today!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Comfortable with quiet

"It takes approximately 4.5 seconds of car radio silence before the average person switches channels. We are ill equipped to handle silence."

David Megginson

So,...

... what's happening?

Your dune challenge...

Zip it.

The ocean glance...

Listen.

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Roll up, Roll up!

Ra ta ta da la da la ta.. da.. da...!

Phineas T. Barnum was an 1800's circusman. The creator of 'The Greatest Show on Earth' was famous for the hype he used to get people through the gates and filling his coffers.

While wrongly credited with saying "*There's a sucker born every minute*", he isn't what you picture your modern sales professional aspiring to be. But 100 years before the term Unique Selling Proposition was even invented, P.T. was using succinct, clever, point-of-difference phrases to capture a potential audience's interest.

"Touch a live shark!", the sign would scream. "The club that killed Captain Cook!". "See the Great Behemoth of the Scriptures!" (a Hippo). And of his 'mermaid' freakshow act... "The Greatest Curiosity in the World!"

Clear, tantalising, and no-one else is claiming it.

Your dune challenge...

If you were to leave a client with one phrase resonating in their head after they leave your bigtop, what do you want it to be? "Fastest service in town"? "Comes in all the colours of the rainbow"? "Most comprehensive training package in our industry?"

Be clear about what your great behemoth is... and tell people.

The ocean glance...

Despite stretching truth in advertising, P.T. was famous for dealing fairly in business transactions. He understood that making friends today was good business for tomorrow. Invest in a friendship today... they might just be your Jumbo* down the track!

* Jumbo the elephant was P.T.'s greatest attraction - "Biggest in the world!" apparently....

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

J. Vitale, *There's a customer born every minute*, Wiley, NJ, 2006.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Kinetic over potential

To learn the full lesson, you've got to finish something. To finish it, you've got to start it.

Prepping for a workshop this week, I had to reflect on what I've learnt from running this business.

It became apparent I've learnt the most from the ideas I actually *moved* on, and even more from those I'd seen through to some form of completion.

The "eureka!" business ideas I've had but not acted on (like a *No Sooky La La's* book about personal accountability in selling, or SPECIAL questions innovation workshops, or a sales thinking & walking group called *Walkie Talkie*, or a Sales Educational Roadtrip involving a minibus...) - I've learnt virtually nothing from (other than I'm a strange ideas man...).

But the ones I made real, had a crack at, and particularly those I saw through to the end... those I can pick through the bones of for lessons.

Your dune challenge...

Start something and commit to finishing something.

The conversation with the potential client that scares you, or that business-building idea you thought was the bee's knees in the training course.... start it today. It will teach you something, and it may even work.

The less-important client you've committed to servicing each month, or the discipline of filling in your post-call notes.... see the task through. The lesson on completion will be worth it.

The ocean glance...

The ideas I let evaporate and initiatives I let die early (like sales networking breakfasts and a sales talent management service) maybe aren't right for the business just now. But the rubble of lessons from the things I started and persisted with? They form the foundation of my business's future. Keep pedaling!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

A tale of two coffees

"A cup of coffee commits one to forty years of friendship."

Turkish proverb

Last month, a colleague and I ordered a coffee (his, a Latte). The waitress brought it over - his, a flat white. We were engrossed in conversation and he started happily drinking. A moment later, the waitress came back with a Latte and apologised sincerely for her mixup. Free coffee.

Yesterday, different cafe & colleague, we sat outside enjoying crisp Adelaide winter sun. Waitress brought correct coffees, and when she came to clear the cups, my friend asked for another. She said *"Sorry sir, you'll have to come in to the counter and order."* He said *"I've got the right change..."*. *"Sorry sir, the counter."* A walk of 15 feet to order from the same lady, and the place wasn't busy.

Policy - helps your customers, or gets in the way of common sense?

Your dune challenge...

Bend the rules. If you can see your customer-service policy defies common sense (and will make for a rightfully frustrated customer), weigh up the merits of rebelling.

Don't harm anyone, don't break the law, and consider the longer term implications of what you'll do here... but don't do something dumb just because *"that's our policy"*.

The ocean glance...

Not only did we form an opinion of the counter-service-only cafe, we quickly pigeon-holed the waitress as inflexible and rude. She might've just been doing what she'd been told.... but I'm the customer, and I'm judging you. Hats off to the free coffee lady!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Papa's precision

"It is a masterly example of literary art, simple and magnificent.
Every word in it is right; not one word could have been added."

1954 review of *The old man and the sea*

The opening lines to Hemingway's Nobel Prize winning book - "*He was an old man who fished alone in the Gulf Stream and he had gone eighty-four days now without taking a fish. In the first forty days a boy had been with him.*"

In three lines, he sets the scene to be played out through the rest of the book - a story of an old Cuban man, a young boy and a giant fish.

Culling unnecessary words, using simple considered sentences to create clear mental pictures. Great sales strategy.

Your dune challenge...

The questions you'll ask and presentations you'll give this week - cut out polyfiller and make clear statements.

In your email replies and quote cover letters and tender submissions, keep your message simple and build vivid benefit images.

The ocean glance...

I've inherited this musty masterpiece, and my aunt's margin pencil marks from when she studied the book at school make it more special. Handwriting gets read - show a client yours today!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

Ernest Hemingway, *The old man and the sea*, Alden Press, Oxford UK, 1954.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Whoa back

"When we are constantly fast, we lose our ability to communicate.
Our health and relationships suffer. We make more mistakes, our creativity is dulled.
We spend a lot of time just skimming the surface."

Geoff Small, *The speed of slow*

I'm all for fast. High sales cadence to keep doing things customers need at a pace competitors won't. But Geoff Small, ex-corporate rat racer and Australia's 'leading authority on slow' makes a compelling case for intermittently pulling the reins. He says;

- Taking a slow moment lets you look at both 'slow' and 'fast' and select which is needed in each area of your life to achieve the balance you want
- Slow allows you to see opportunities that blur past when you're moving quickly
- Slow is kinder to us, our bodies & minds, and lets us be kinder to others, which is more sustainable

He says slow isn't opposed to fast - in fact, slow supports it. Slow philosophy says you can go fast when you *need* to, but you can pull back when you *want* to.

Your dune challenge...

Book a slow moment this week. Nothing penciled in the diary for an hour, no phone on, and reflect on your business. What's worked well so far this year, what else are you aiming to achieve, what are you feeling in control of and what's fraying at the edges?

Then, decide where some more fast is needed, and where a little more slow to iron out bugs or rebuild your mojo would be therapeutic.

The ocean glance...

A slower-life tip from Small - find your slow haven. For some, it's a book; others, the garden. To let you ride at a fast cadence in the sales workday, give yourself a defined reset button place you can visit often!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

Geoff Small, *The speed of slow*, in *Speed at work*, Australian Institute of Management, Wiley, NSW, 2006.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Good dog, that

"I just give a whistle, and I call for Bob the Kelpie...."

Don Spencer

A few weeks ago, I drove past the offices of Rural Press, home of *The Stock Journal*. They had a sandwich board on the footpath announcing a competition for their readers. In big letters, it said "WIN A KELPIE!"

Fine animal that it is, I don't want a Kelpie.

But bet lots of *Stock Journal* readers do.

(Worth its weight in Pal, a good sheep dog.)

Your dune challenge...

Create an eye-catching incentive for your clients. Something different - highly specific and valuable to them. That won't cost you the earth, but gets the people you're targeting off their seats and contacting you.

The ocean glance...

Three ways to get people entering contests - make the prize unbelievably good (like \$90M in lotto); make the odds as short as you can (1 in 10 chance of winning) or make the prize super relevant. What's *your* version of a Kelpie?

Create it, and advertise it!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

Poor prospects

"The worst part of selling is dealing with negative people."

Brian Tracy

The sales training classic that piqued my interest in this field, Brian Tracy's *Advanced Selling Strategies* is packed with fundamental sales success tips.

Tracy identifies seven characteristics possessed by poor business prospects. Not that you should ignore these people, but the more of these traits a potential client has, the less time you should consider investing in them.

- **Generally negative demeanor** - some people are just happy being unhappy
- **Difficult to demonstrate value to** - you just can't show them how you can help them
- **Can only buy small** - is your potential return worth the time & energy investment?
- **No opportunity for follow-up sales** - the relationship hits a dead end
- **Limited testimonial / referral value** - word-of-mouth is powerful, but these people won't or can't help you with it
- **Their own business isn't in great shape** - they blame others for failure, or are poor payers
- **Geographically distant** - your service costs are high and ability to stay close low

Your dune challenge...

Take a look at the client you're about to try wooing. Run them through the above checklist. Are there more downsides than up? Are there others better positioned to help you in return for your time, products and services?

One tick mightn't mean you shouldn't try, but a lot of other people need your help... focus on the right ones.

The ocean glance...

Widgets come and go, services change... the one constant you have to sell to a client (and that's worth a bucketload) is your time. Make sure you don't fritter it on the unhelpable!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

Brian Tracy, *Advanced Selling Strategies*, Fireside, New York, 1995.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

One pedal after another

Who has constant high cadence?

The sales professional that calls on their best client every day...

The postie who never misses a delivery...

The business developer that fills in call notes after every single call...

The 5-year old that wants a Freddo Frog and just keeps asking...

The account manager that reviews a pre-call checklist before each conversation...

Lance Armstrong...

The client recruiter that contacts 5 new prospects every day...

Airlines...

The product specialist that enters every meeting with a call objective...

The Icebergs (crazy old people that swim in the ocean 365 days per year)...

The Rep that sends a thank-you note after every meeting...

Just when you think it's getting too cold, too stressful, too hard... take a look around - who else keeps turning the pedals regardless?

Your dune challenge...

Turn them one more time today. Then get ready to do it again on Monday.

The ocean glance...

It's easy to keep positive sales habits moving when your tail is wagging. But the difference between the successful and not? They do the hard stuff when it's hardest of all. Channel Churchill.... never give up!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Opening lines

"Words... don't come easy to me..."

F.R. David

The prospect (let's call them Jo) you've managed to get in front of for the first time.... what do you say? Maybe...

"Hi Jo, thanks very much for seeing me today. *(Insert "beautiful office / roses out front / can-I-get-you-a-coffee?" situation-specific ice-breaking comment)*

Jo, I specialise in *(insert your professional superpower here)*.

Based on *(my research of your situation / your comments in our initial phone call / what our mutual contact has mentioned)*, there might be some ways I can help you.

To make sure I understand, could you tell me, *(insert great situation clarification question here -what / why / how / when / who...?)*.

OK Jo, based on what you've just told me, here's how I might be able to help you..."

No snake oil, no pushy pushy, no generic pitches for the masses. A bespoke consultant's approach.

Your dune challenge...

Make the words your own - tweak them, you-ify them, but follow the basic structure for a chat with a potential new client. Build rapport, introduce your expertise area, ask questions about their situation and needs, then offer ideas on how you might help.

The ocean glance...

The temptation is to jump in after they've answered one question and start blurting out your amazing help offer. But hold off. Acknowledge their first answer with a "yes, I understand..." and dig a little deeper with one or two more questions. You'll understand their needs better, and they'll trust you more!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Oxygen deprivation

"The body can be taught to be more efficient at using Oxygen."

io altitude simulation

io (inside out) is a New Zealand business that specialises in altitude simulation. No vertical wind tunnels or sitting atop mountains - you recline in an armchair and breathe in computer-controlled amounts of oxygen for an hour. By progressively reducing the amount of O2 delivered, the simulator trains your body to be more efficient with its use.

Used by athletes to prepare for treks, climbs and rides, the technology claims to help insomniacs sleep better and asthmatics breathe better.

Could provoking your body to perform better in harsh sales conditions help your everyday client recruitment efficiency?

Your dune challenge...

Try reducing your sales Oxygen intake today. Role-play a stressful sales conversation with a colleague. Push yourself to call on a high-demand O2-sapping client. Devote 20 minutes to understanding the market analysis spreadsheet-from-hell your boss sent through.

Then get about your regular business - see if there's a spring in your step.

The ocean glance...

io can measure your readiness to climb Mt Cook, then help you prep for Kilimanjaro and ultimately Everest. The stressing is cumulative and it takes time to prepare for base camp. Sales-Oxygen deprivation shouldn't be a one-off simulation - make it a habit!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

(Visit www.io-nz.com if you're feeling a bit Sherpa!)

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Go team!

"I am a member of a team - I rely on it, defer to it and sacrifice for it,
because the team, not the individual, is the ultimate champion."

Mia Hamm, former FIFA Women's Player of the Year

Stephen Kohn and Vincent O'Connell draw on 50 years of experience & research to offer seven principles for effective client-team relationship management. They contend;

1. **Teams must always add value to clients** - fix their problems, make it economical, give them peace of mind.
2. **Teams must add value before reducing price** - discounting is last resort; there are lots of other ways to add value.
3. **Teams are the face of their organisation** - you and your client-facing colleagues personify your business. It starts and ends with you.
4. **Clients don't care about suppliers internal systems** - rather than explaining your logjams, demonstrate commitment to finding solutions.
5. **Teams must never waste a clients time** - honour appointments; be prepared for meetings; demonstrate value *every time* they invest time.
6. **Teams must spend time nurturing internal relationships** - your co-workers can affect *your* relationships with a client, so get close to them.
7. **Teams must commit to skill development & learning** - clients want to know you are staying at the leading edge of the industry

Your dune challenge...

Run your eye down the list - is there one where your team isn't earning a gold star in a client's mind yet?

Don't moan about slack colleagues - extend the olive branch, get them together and discuss a more cohesive, customer-focused team approach to over-delivering on client expectations.

The ocean glance...

Consider using the same great relationship building and managing skills you apply with your best customers. Approach interactions with your team mates like they are 'VIP sales clients' - watch where it gets you!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

6 habits of highly effective teams, S Kohn & V O'Connell, Career Press, NJ, 2007.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Sales CPR

"Breathe.... it won't be long..."

Kylie

Working with a clever life-saving technology company in Melbourne last week, it got me thinking about the CPR training we did at school (yes, should really update my certificate). Apply the acronym to a sales conversation car crash (unhappy client) you might be faced with;

- **Danger** - has everything fully exploded, or is there still the chance something could blindside you?
- **Response** - how is the client feeling? Numb, angry, ready to walk? Ask.
- **Airways** - is the obstruction (cause of the problem) still there? What can you do to remove it?
- **Breathing** - are things still moving forward sluggishly despite the challenges? If not,...
- **Circulation** - is the relationship dead? Or just in desperate need of some amazing attention and service?

Your dune challenge...

When someone does their lolly at you (not if - when), start at D. Keep a level head, ask the questions, use a process to help you determine the right way forward. Tempting to kneejerk straight to compressions - use the acronym first.

The ocean glance...

The medical simulation technology this company makes displays patient vital signs to help with diagnosis and monitoring. Do you know the vital signs you should be observing to monitor *your* client relationships? Now *there's* a topic for a sales meeting!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Warts

Ugly mole or endearing flaw?

No such thing as the perfect organisation or sales professional. You see successful tech widget makers with dodgy agricultural showrooms, or ultra-helpful reps that clients love (but look like they spent last night in a dumpster). The complete package is never porcelain-smooth.

Observations of the flawed-but-kicking-goals-anyway;

- **They know their warts** - it wouldn't surprise this business or sales gun if you point out their weak spot. They're conscious of it, and they either can't change it or choose not to.
- **The flaw isn't deal-breaking** - forgivable because it's not harming you
- **The freckle is kinda cute** - it can add to their charm, their uniqueness
- **They overcompensate elsewhere** - they are uber-good in areas that really count - helping you, fixing your issues, realising your dreams
- **They remind us of us** - you can see past sales gloss; they're real people trying hard in tough situations. You know what that's like.

Your dune challenge...

Remove the rose-coloured's and view your flaws as a sales professional. What are you just not that flash at? Where's your biggest professional imperfection? Is it a deal-breaker for the clients you want on board? Can you really overcompensate in the more important areas?

The ocean glance...

If you know the wart-off antidote to help you improve your game, by all means apply it. But don't spend 3am staring at the ceiling worried they won't love you because your proposal uses the wrong font. Do the important stuff exceptionally well - clients may even enjoy the quirks of investing with you (freckles and all!)

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

20 minutes

"Work is elastic. Time is not."

In *Detox your desk*, Professor of Organisational Psychology Cary Cooper doles out advice for those getting overwhelmed with a neverending to-do list.

Cooper suggests working for no more than 20 minutes without a break. Every 20 minutes, stop what you're doing for 60 seconds (no more). Look out the window, stretch, think about what's for tea tonight... then get back into it.

This 20 minute method helps you stay focused and keep overwhelm in check.

Your dune challenge...

Try the 20-minute method today. If your tasks are only 10 minutes each, do two back to back before pausing. Don't abuse the technique - short time reward for absolute focus.

The ocean glance...

Cooper also advocates a 'power hour' at the time of the day when you are naturally atop your game. No 20-minute breaks in this hour - work every bit of mojo you can from it. Save power hour for your most important tasks and give it your full attention.

Have a **MIGHTY** day!

Detox your desk, T Theobald & C Cooper, Wiley, UK 2007

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Sore finger

"A grain of sand can make a difference.

It's small, but have you ever walked around with a grain of sand in your shoe?

It's not comfortable."

Professor Bernice Reagon

Breaking self-imposed rules about how many sales stories you can milk from minutia, I cut my finger chopping tomatoes yesterday.

Sore, swaddled in 57 band-aids.... "*stop sooking, it's a paper cut!*" You're right... but it's slowed my typing speed by about 30%. When you write lengthy sales messages and create PowerPoint presentations for a living, that's a whack in productivity.

Good news for you - shorter runs for a couple of days. Bad news for me - a paper cut hurts my business. How dumb.

What's your version of a paper-cut? The silly little thing that stops you delivering better, faster, cheaper to your clients? The rate-limiting step that just shouldn't be?

Your dune challenge...

Identify one really simple thing that's stopping you delivering more, better or faster to your clients. A policy of calling into the office each morning before client visits. You haven't got the sales data software installed on your laptop yet. Your remote email access isn't set up. You don't carry spare copies of the brochure in your car. No-one's shown you how to use the quote template.

Fix it. It's dumb, and it hurts your ability to help more people.

The ocean glance...

Aside from exploring voice-activated software and getting myself a Ms Money Penny-style PA, I'm looking at the upsides. The words are hitting the screen slower (so should be more considered) and I'm picking up the phone instead of emailing. Silver linings are wherever you choose to look!

Have a **MIGHTY** day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

We'll save you

"Gerry Harvey is the best retailer Australia has produced in living memory.

In fact, he'll tell you that himself!"

BRW's James Kirby

Best mate of Singo, mad-keen horse purchaser and maker of cheesy furniture ads, Gerry Harvey has amassed a retailing fortune estimated around AUD \$1.5 Billion in 2007.

In *Business secrets of Harvey Norman's Retailing Mastermind*, author Kirby distills 10 success lessons from the monotoned one. 3 that stand out;

- **Walk and talk your brand** - "You are the best example of your company" - let everyone see it, share your story, make it visible everywhere you go.
- **Leave nothing to chance** - the slow-talking relaxed figure on the TV is underpinned by a meticulous planner that leaves nothing to chance, both short and long term.
- **Move fast, they're right behind you** - Harvey takes the business into new areas long before others are willing to try. Once he's decided on an initiative, he'll back it fully and move quickly.

Your dune challenge...

Do every single one of your long-standing clients know what your business stands for? All of the benefits you have to offer? If *you* believe in them, share them.

Draw yourself a map of how you'll make '09's sales target. Then sketch a mud-map of where you want to be in 3 years and the goat tracks you'll start down to get there.

Then... go. If you don't act on that cracking brainwave, someone else will have it soon. And they will. And they'll profit.

The ocean glance...

Final Harvey-ism - go with your instincts, not the herd. Few people pay attention to what Harvey *doesn't* do - he doesn't follow trends that don't make sense to him. If you see sales lemmings trying something you don't think will help your customers... don't do it!

Have a **MIGHTY** day!

Business secrets of Harvey Norman's Retailing Mastermind, J. Kirby, Wiley, Qld, 2003.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

I'm an individual

"Is it true that the higher I climb, the more I need to 'pull my head in'
and worry about what other people think?"

Leela Cosgrove

Writing for *Anthill* magazine, MD of *Business Writers Anonymous* Leela Cosgrove weighs up the merits of conforming to an audience's expectations of you, versus just being yourself.

Brasher than most, 'being Leela' means exposing her full sleeve tattoos at business conferences, sharing her passion for Marilyn Manson music and voicing highly provocative opinions.

Her question (let it resonate awhile) - how much should you compromise what you say and how you say it for the sake of profit or being accepted by the client herd?

Your dune challenge...

You disagree with what the boss is doing... you think the client's opinion is wrong... you know the choice they're about to make going with a competitor will be bad for them...

Consider three paths you can take - 1. Ignore (it's none of your business). 2. Gracefully and subtly give them an alternative viewpoint, or 3. Be candid and firm (they mightn't like it, but they should know). Be conscious of the approach you'll take and have conviction to stand behind it.

The ocean glance...

Humble sales-guy perspective - you have to earn the right to fully 'be yourself'. Until you ask others about *themselves*... no-one cares about you. To earn the right? Turn up. Show interest. Ask questions. Be attentive. Inspire the client to invite you in. Then you can show off your dimples!

Have a **MIGHTY** day!

When is too much, too much? L Cosgrove on www.anthillonline.com , 27/7/09.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Second set of eyes

"Does my bum look big in this?"

Every husbands nightmare

I sat in two committee meetings this week. As someone running a one-person business, the process of group decision-making sometimes makes me breathe out deeply.

But soliciting the opinion and perspectives of others, even those polar to your own, generates more ideas and helps avoid missing the obvious. A second set of eyes to point out the things that live in your blind spot.

Your own processes and checklists can help you pick up the spell-check mistakes. But another human will spot the grammatical errors.

Could have done with that yesterday to catch the 'confirm' that should have been 'conform'...

Your dune challenge...

Phone-a-friend - ask a colleague to proof a quote you're about to post, or a cover letter, or listen to the 3-amazing-benefits-of-partnering-me conversation map you're about to run through with a client.

Even if you don't take all their advice on board, get a second opinion.

The ocean glance...

The diversity of opinions in your committee meeting / sales meeting, and those of your customer group is exactly the same. It makes sense to expose yourself to the thought processes of others that group discussions can uncover. Tolerance and active listening in internal meetings is a customer-focused activity!

Have a **MIGHTY** day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Simple and effective

"Making the simple complicated is commonplace.

Making the complicated simple, awesomely simple, that takes creativity."

Charles Mingus

I was treated to a back-to-basics epiphany this weekend.

In their first season of netball, my daughter's team is having a ball, but not getting much of it. Strategies and well-meaning parent instructions ("*make space!*") are lost on them. During the week, they were blessed to have a former Australian player come to training and give them tips. Her message - "*Each of you girls only has one job this weekend - that's it. Wing Attack, when the whistle blows, you run as fast as you can to this spot and call for the ball. That's all. Centre, your only job is to look for and pass to Wing Attack as quickly as possible. Nothing else. Goal Shooter, your job? Stay in the D circle. Goal Keeper...*"

Focus on doing that one thing really well, and other stuff will come.

They scored 8 goals against a great team - you'd have thought they'd won the Grand Final.

Your dune challenge...

Strip your complex and confusing work back to its most basic. What one thing are you ultimately employed to do? What one task would have the biggest positive impact on your business? Make a phone call? Go see and support an existing client? Ask for a referral? Get the proposal out?

The most important thing you can do today might be really simple.

The ocean glance...

Game result aside, each child strode more confidently at the final whistle. They had a tangible point of pride ("*I did one thing better than anyone else on the court today!*") Don't think this is only important to 8-year-olds....

Have a **MIGHTY** day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Mr Ohno

"People don't go to Toyota to work.
They go there to think."

Taiichi Ohno

The father of the lean manufacturing process that's made Toyota famous in business schools, Taiichi Ohno was a hard task master whose style wouldn't be popular with modern HR departments.

One of Ohno's chief engineers in the 1950's, Nampachi Hayashi recounts a time when 2 out of ten car bodies needed repainting due to a quality problem. He saw the workers having problems moving the faulty bodies back into the paint shop, so he put a motor in place to help the process. Ohno saw this attempt at kaizen (improvement) and went nuclear. He made Hayashi push car bodies around manually for a day, before telling him "*Your job is to create a system so no failures occur. That is your job!*"

Don't spend your time band-aiding when there are root causes to be fixed.

Your dune challenge...

Are you dispensing band-aids in your role when there are underlying problems you could fix? Clients using your products or services to plug a hole in a dike that you know how to fix?

Will you spend time on something today under the guise of 'work' when you'd actually get a better return on investment for 'thinking'?

The ocean glance...

Zero errors - perfection - maybe beyond reach. But the philosophy of kaizen says you can always work to get one step closer to it. Take one step closer to the perfect sales and service approach for your clients today.... think about how!

Have a **MIGHTY** day!

Toyota - People, ideas and the challenge of the new. Reingold, E., Penguin, UK, 1999.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Un-tasks

"You only get one birthday a year.

But you get 364 un-birthdays!

A very merry un-birthday, to you..."

The March Hare

Things I chose not to do yesterday;

- Phone the client that's given me the most money over the past 3 years
- Book a coffee with a top IT sales rep who might be interested in a coaching program
- Send a thank-you note to the client that referred me to another
- Run through my financials to work out how much I now need to sell each month to hit my year's number
- Write 2 pages of the next MIGHTY white paper (on time management)
- Send my wife flowers
- Go for a run in the dark
- Build one more service that would help my current clients
- Ask for 10 referrals

These were my 'un-tasks' - things I could have focused on instead of the things I actually did. I didn't consciously not do them - but by doing the other tasks on my to-do list, I still made the choice.

Your dune challenge...

What are you *not doing* by following your to-do list today? Delivering an extra dose of help to those who've paid for it? Finding one more person who'd benefit from your assistance? Investing 15 minutes building the cleverest sales initiative anyone's come up with in your industry for 10 years?

Are the tasks on your list more important than your un-tasks?

The ocean glance...

"Aauuggghh! I don't have enough time to do what's already on the to-do list, let alone worry about what's not on it!". To-do list myopia isn't always bad, but given the un-tasks floating in the background, you better make sure what's on the list is unequivocally, categorically the very best use of your time. And to make the most of it, you might want to try doing them frighteningly well....

Have a **MIGHTY** day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

The Red Arrows

Precision (and the domino effect of your wobbles)

Great doco this week on National Geographic, "*Danger Men*". The story of the Red Arrows - the British Air Force precision flying team.

An amazing study in 'practice makes perfect' (3 flights per day, 5 days per week for months), these guys are stringently tested every year just to stay in the team (would you pass your job interview if it was held again tomorrow?)

The thing that stuck in my head was their mantra of 'stay in your box'. Flying jets 6 feet apart, they each imagine an invisible box around their planes. Each has to trust that, if they see the plane next to them move slightly, everyone will stay in their box. Because if one guy pulls away thinking his neighbour might bump him, then the next guy will pull away faster and further, and the domino effect is disastrous.

Stay in your box, and do your bit with precision.

Your dune challenge...

Contemplate the domino effect if you stray out of your box today - if you don't do the thing you've been hired to do exceptionally well.

If you don't follow up on the telephone enquiry, you can't take the order. The warehouse team can't stay in their box (get an order shipped), so the finance team can't stay in their box (generate an invoice) and customer service can't stay in theirs (follow-up with a post-purchase phone call), and...

The ocean glance...

We spend lots of time trying to think outside the box. Create new initiatives, go one better than competitors, add more value. But it all hinges on first getting the bit inside the box done right. Get Maverick - stay in your box!

Have a **MIGHTY** day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Santa, Seth & the Sweetheart

"Return to sender, address unknown, no such number, no such zone..."

Elvis

Ever left a phone message, hearing *"I'll return your call as soon as I can..."*, and they don't? They lied. Sent an email awaiting a response that never comes? No bounce-back message or out-of-office auto-reply, so you assume they got it. They're ignoring you.

Too busy to reply? I emailed a note of gratitude to one of the brightest business minds on the planet 2 weeks ago. Within 8 hours he'd emailed me a short personal reply. Father Christmas, elusive as he is, manages to reply to every child that writes him.

My 5-year-old's sweetheart wrote her a thank-you note for his birthday present. Taught by his folks the value of reciprocating and expressing gratitude when an arm of friendship is extended.

Are you less considerate than a 5-year-old? Busier than Santa? More in-demand than Seth?

Your dune challenge...

Reply. When a phone message lands, even from someone you aren't thrilled about, find a way to reply. When the email arrives from a human that took the time to hand craft it for you, send a short reply.

If you'd like your clients to extend the same courtesy, do it for your suppliers. Because they are one and the same.

The ocean glance...

The sales professional's role is to get ever busier - that's where sales live. The best way I know to get busier - start conversations, follow up and follow through. By not replying, you cut conversations short. Smart sales move - reply!

Have a **MIGHTY** day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Fundraising speeches

"Listen, please listen, said the elephant..."

The Elephant Song, Kamahl

At a schmancy fundraiser this weekend (nosebleed section), I got to hear several great speakers including Kamahl, SA Premier Mike Rann and businessman Rob Gerard AO. Presentation tips demonstrated by the best in the spotlight;

- **Break the ice** - make light of yourself, show a human side, get the audience smiling and relaxed.
- **Thank people** - from distinguished guests to punters off the street, everyone likes being made to feel important.
- **Ask a question** - "*Are you having fun? How good was Delta? Why are people so unkind?*"; A split-second that lets the audience connect to the conversation, reflect, and lets the presenter collect their thoughts.
- **Have a clear message** - from get-out-your-wallets to vote-for-me to let's-have-a-Commonwealth-Games-in-Adelaide, the best got their message across clearly.
- Repeat the thanks, repeat the calls to action, and finish with positivity and **energy!**

Your dune challenge...

Apply this fundraising philosophy to the client you'll sit opposite this week. If you're not confident with a joke, use a big smile and warm voice to thaw things. Speak of your gratitude for the time and effort a client has made to see you.

Ask questions to better understand them and their situation - it's engaging. Present how you can help in clear simple words. And find a way to do it 3 times - repetition works (ever wondered why these emails are broken into 3 sections?)

The ocean glance...

These presenters had an advantage - a slightly sozzled crowd who knew they were at a fundraiser and would have felt guilty not spending. So? Learn from it. Find a way to show hospitality to a potential client; give them clear expectations of what a partnership with you will bring, and showcase the unbelievable value of *your* service so that they'd feel miserable not buying from you!

Have a **MIGHTY** day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Artists shift your thinking

"The most acclaimed artists not only create more works than their peers,
they also generate more failures."

Dean Simonton

In his analysis of how people can change the minds of others, Cognition Professor Howard Gardner looks at revolutionary artists. He suggests that artists create watershed moments - alter the thinking of an entire population - by doing 3 things;

- **They expand our notion of what is possible** - before Picasso, who would have thought you could create art out of cubes? They push the boundaries.
- **They employ themes that have rarely been touched on** - did you ever see a melting watch before Salvador Dali painted it? Warhol's can of soup on a wall? They blaze trails with new ideas.
- **They help us understand and define an era** - consider Dickens or James Joyce. They stand apart from others, but were in touch with and were relevant to what was happening around them.

Beethoven and Michelangelo and Jimi Hendrix changed minds through their art. Whose mind do you want to change with yours?

Your dune challenge...

Channel Mozart or the Bronte sisters this week and finish the sentence - "*Something that's never been done in our industry by me or my competitors for my customers, but that I could try, is....*". Need inspiration? Go to the business section of your public library; take a walk through a busy shopping centre and think about the businesses you pass; write a list of 42 annoyances in your best customer's day. (Can't? Better go ask...)

The ocean glance...

Gardner - "*Artists convey their personal visions using light and colour, sound and rhythm, metaphor and rhyme, bodily movement and facial expression.*" Do you have a strong personal vision for how you want to help your customers? Apply your sales artist's palette to create something revolutionary today!

Have a **MIGHTY** day!

Changing minds, Gardner, H., Harvard Business School Press, Boston, US, 2006.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Trinny & Susannah

"You've got a magnificent pair of - show them off!"

Trinny

(I swear it was on in the background while I was working...) British TV fashionistas Trinny and Susannah undress frumpy housewives and feral fellas, restyling them to boost their self-confidence and suaveness.

Like 'em or not, they apply some simple and sensible principles;

- **Don't delude yourself** - know your flaws and your great points, because only then can you...
- **Accentuate the positives** - find styles that make the most of what you've been given, and...
- **Hide the fat rolls you don't like** - by all means get on the treadmill, but while they're there (and they may always be), dress to draw the eye away.

Your dune challenge...

Strip your sales game nude and have a gawk. What do you naturally excel at - what's buff and desirable about how you approach your sales role? What do clients love? Find an opportunity to show it off to a client this week.

What are you less happy about - your sales cellulite? If you know how to fix it, start planning and acting to do so. But don't let it demotivate you or hamper your efforts this week - cover it or do something outstanding in another area that draws attention away from it.

The ocean glance...

T&S philosophy - *"Make an effort in the way you dress - not for others, but for yourself."* Look sharp, feel good about yourself and it will show in how you carry yourself. To the mirror!

Have a **MIGHTY** day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

7 things to do today

The excuse bus just left...

A ton sounds like a lot, right? Put '100' next to 'number of working days left in 2009' (mm, hmm), it suddenly feels tight. No time to waste - if you're fresh out of ideas, here's 7 calls you can make today;

- **The client you saw in the paper** ("*Congratulations on your success! Let me buy you a cuppa...*")
- **The most successful sales professional in your business** ("*Your success is fantastic. I'd love to buy you a cuppa and pick your brains...*")
- **Your best client** ("*Thank you for all your support, I'd love to buy you a cuppa...*")
- **The businessperson you really admire** ("*You don't know me, but I've followed your progress and wanted you to know it inspires me. I'd love to buy you a cuppa...*")
- **An industry colleague treading the same beat as you** ("*I'd love to catch up over coffee and see if there are ways we can help one another and the clients we share...*")
- **A friend selling in a different industry** ("*I've always admired the way you build relationships with your clients and would love to know how - can we hook up for coffee...*")
- **Someone new in your or a client's business** ("*I know how daunting it is when you're new- if you're keen, love to catch up over coffee and help you...*")

Your dune challenge...

Make the call. Even one. Today.

The ocean glance...

OK, I drink too much coffee, but *Seinfeld* watchers know 'coffee' doesn't just mean coffee. Face-to-face meetings with these seven people will grow your business. Make one of these calls each day for the next 100 days, and if you don't smash your number, I'll buy you a cuppa....

Have a **MIGHTY** day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

The bush storyteller

"I am who I am. If I'm truly unique - to my DNA and my fingerprints -
why on earth would I try to be someone else?"

Robert Kearney

At an SA Great *Speakers in Schools* training session this week, I experienced one of the best presenters I've ever seen.

Robert Kearney is a 60-something ex-Prison Warden, Poet, Police Hostage Negotiator, Author and Vietnam War Veteran who helped establish Operation Flinders - an outback training course for imprisoned and at-risk youth. Now training academics, corporate suits and country fire volunteers, he shared some tips for delivering engaging presentations. A rough-diamond's gems;

- **Tell a story** - it's not bragging if it's true and you deliver it with humility. People want to hear vivid, real-life, it-happened-to-me stories.
- **Be inclusive** - get the audience to side with you. Don't preach at them - ask them questions, ask their opinions, speak at their level.
- **Vary your RSVP** - Rhythm, Speed, Volume, Pitch - keep any of them the same for too long, and they'll sleep.
- **Make eye contact fast** - the sooner every member of the audience knows you've made eye-to-eye connection with them, the more they'll pay attention
- **Be yourself** - don't mimic other presenters or put on false bravado. Relax and let your natural style come out through your stories.

Your dune challenge...

Turn a product presentation into an engaging, relevant story this coming week. Share a case study of a similar client, or use a metaphor to describe the benefits that a client will understand. Don't give a waffly speech - ask questions, make your presentation interactive, put something in their hands. Try mixing it up.

The ocean glance...

Kearney's take-home message about working with kids - "*You can't always be interesting, but there's no bl**dy excuse for not being interested.*" It doesn't matter if you don't have a slick patter - ask great questions, it's surefire to flatter!

(shall now leave the poetry to the experts...)

Have a **MIGHTY** weekend!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Mayor Rudy

Why you should fix broken windows...

During Rudolf Giuliani's seven years as Mayor, New York city homicide rates plunged from 2,245 down to 642 in his last year in office. Famous for his zero-tolerance policy to crime, Giuliani says he drew on James Wilson & George Kelling's "*Broken Window Theory*". That if you ignore a broken window in a derelict house, vandals will come along and break more windows, and then break in, and crime level escalates.

But pay attention to minor infractions - like panhandling, graffiti and subway turnstile jumping - and you actually reduce all crime, including major felonies. Fix the broken windows quickly before things get out of control.

Your dune challenge...

Be honest about any broken windows a customer might see in you or your business this week. Tardiness returning phone calls; constant back orders; your rough-around-the-edges personal presentation; crusty old brochures.

Fix the broken windows. If you don't, it's only a matter of time before clients start thinking about bigger service crimes that might follow.

The ocean glance...

Widely applauded for his role steering New York through 9/11, Giuliani had spent the months leading up writing a book about leadership. He said the timing was "*ironic, prophetic and very useful*" in helping him deal with the madness. Don't wait until you need the training - upskill yourself in something today!

Have a **MIGHTY** weekend!

R Giuliani, *Leadership*, LB Books, Great Britain, 2002.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Digital vs Analogue selling

Black, white or shades of grey.

If you've not noticed, I approach much of my work 'digitally'. Digital means all or none. On or off. One or zero. 5 beach runs a week for all. Comprehensive 24-hour post-workshop summary notes. Mighty sales reps, not luke-warm ones. (Geez, I'm a hard-nose... not really!)

It's my natural bias and has pro's and con's. Digital activities are considered higher performance, but they're hard to sustain, they're inflexible, and when the signal fails, it fails completely.

Some of the most successful sales professionals I've met are more analogue. Comfortable spreading themselves across the bandwidth; varying levels of effort and service, depending on client needs, market noise and energy levels. Not flat out, but more sustainable, flexible and less likely to crash.

Neither approach is perfect. But it pays to understand the opportunities and Achilles heel your personal bias comes with.

Your dune challenge...

Do you take on a new sales challenge with the zeal of a overexcited puppy, chasing rabbits flat out until you fall in a screaming heap (then start thinking about a new activity)? Or do you mete your effort out in more sustainable doses?

For the digital - not everyone has a set-top box. Consider the value of getting on your customers wavelength, delivering service at a rate and standard *they* want (rather than your own all-or-nothing pace that risks burn-out).

For the analogue - sustainable is great, but are you moving with the pace and energy and clarity that a digital client needs? Consider 'turning the signal off' long enough to think about and assess your next move.

The ocean glance...

That gulp was me swallowing analogue medicine. To those overwhelmed by the inbox storm that is the daily beach run, email & let me know if you'd prefer just 2 emails per week. I'll create a separate distribution list and you'll just get Monday and Wednesday's. All five will still be on the website for you to view. Just email & let me know if the inbox rev's are too high. Analogue flexibility!

(And for the digital? Maybe we'll go High Definition.... 2 emails per day? :-)

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

7 levels of support

"It was worth it... after all, I am your biggest fan!"

IncrediBoy, *The Incredibles*

Consider the spectrum of people surrounding your business;

1. **The actively-eroding** - they don't like you and they're trying to convince others not to like you either
2. **The deliberately-ignoring** - they're not vocal in their sniping, but your correspondence goes straight to their round file
3. **The unaware-you-exist** - they can't judge you because they've never heard of you
4. **The apathetic** - they know you exist, but they don't care yet
5. **The supporter-in-principle** - they like the cut of your jib, but haven't moved to buy or recommend you yet
6. **The conscious-purchaser** - they've seen the light and are investing with you
7. **The raving-fan** - they go out of their way to tell others how good you are

Do you know which group gets most of your time and energy? Is it the right group?

Your dune challenge...

As you map your activities for today, first consider groups 7, 6 and 1.

Are raving fans being supported and motivated and show how to be your unpaid sales force (refer, spread word-of-mouth, stay loyal)? Are conscious purchasers receiving such amazing attention that they're ready to join the fanclub? Are the actively eroding killing great future opportunities - why, and what can you do to stem the flow?

The others are important, but those 3 have the biggest potential to impact your sales efforts today.

The ocean glance...

Keep it bite-size - aim to move clients along the spectrum one step at a time. And while it might take a few steps to get from group 3 to group 7, it can take just one act to get group 6 joining group 1. Group 6 and 7 have earned your attention - make them priority 1 today!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Content marketing

"Buyers are now engaging in discussions, and marketers are rarely invited.

Years of shoving messages down throats have denied them a seat at the table.

They have to find a new way to get invited."

Paul Gillin, *Social Media Marketing*

Get content, get customers is a new book about 'content marketing'. The shift away from advertising billboards, spruikers and here's-why-you-should-buy plugs, towards client-supplier conversations that identify, then deliver the information that the customer needs.

Key points around content marketing;

- Be clear about what you want to achieve before going nuts delivering content to customers
- Determine the sort of information that customers value - ask them
- Decide what you want customers to do for you - define your 'call to action'
- Deliver valuable content rather than just ads - printed or email educational newsletters, relevant articles and papers, tips and tricks lists, training sessions, focus groups and feedback forums.

Make your marketing / profile-building / competency-exposing vehicles educational and valuable to clients, rather than just gratuitous plugs. Show why it's valuable to have you at the table.

Your dune challenge...

The next contact you have with a client - deliver some valuable content rather than a sound-bite ad for your wares. Ask about the challenges they have, the things they'd value learning more about, the obstacles to better results in their lives or business. Then - give it to them. Brand it, explain how your saleable solution can help them even further, but give them something useful regardless of their purchase.

The ocean glance...

The authors cite research suggesting "*the internet will become the world's most dominant advertising medium by 2012*". If you aren't using email, e-news or website content (including blogs, Twitter, Linked-in, Facebook (yep)) as part of your content delivery to customers... might want to do some homework on it!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

Pulizzi, J. & Barrett, N. *Get content, get customers*. McGraw Hill, USA, 2009.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

What will you regret?

"But don't look back in anger..."

Oasis

What will you regret in ten years?

The tattoo. Not thanking your loved ones. The expensive coat that went out of style 3 months later. Not crossing the room to introduce yourself to the inspiring person. Deferring the MBA. Not buying the bunch of flowers. Being selfish and grouchy. Staying late at work doing unimportant stuff. Not paying attention.

Go out on a limb here - things I bet you won't regret;

Laughing with your kids. Going the extra mile to get a client out of a jam. Putting a radical proposal to the boss to improve customer service (even though they said no). Blazing your own trail. Writing gratitude notes. Serving on the committee. Taking time to clear your head and reflect on your path. Learning a new skill. Buying a colleague a coffee and picking their brains. Taking a mate for a beer. Telling people how much you appreciate them. Asking elders to share wisdom.

Friday warm'n'fuzzy, but this is your sales investment plan right here. If you want the no-regrets dividends in 10 years, gotta deposit today.

Your dune challenge...

Take a Sinatra leaf and minimise future regrets. Do something today you just know you'll be proud of in ten years. Might be hard, might come with sacrifice, but if you know it'll pay off, be brave. Might just inspire others.

The ocean glance...

You're making a conscious choice to try brokering client marriages today. If you're passionate about the help you offer and who you're helping, you won't regret it. But if you're not, don't bleat in 10 years time, 'cause you can change it right now. Think a smidgen longer term!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Retail wisdom

"In times of adversity, you need to communicate even more with your customers."

Launa Inman, Managing Director, Target Australia

At an AMCHAM function on Friday, I heard two leaders of Australian retail giants discuss how their businesses and sector were faring through the GFC. The best sales wisdom from the conversation;

- When asked about how they invested their advertising dollars, Paul Zahara, Group GM of David Jones, said they focus heavily on existing loyal customers (direct mailing). His words - *"The market return is better from those that already know us and shop with us."* Paul also said *"Customers perceive value either in the price they pay, or in the quality of the product they buy."*
- On value, Launa Inman (who heads Target's 25,000 staff in Aus) said *"Speak about the quality you offer, not just your price. If you spend too much time just positioning yourself as a low-cost provider, it's difficult to get a market paying attention to your quality. Quality first, then price."*

(Both businesses doing quite nicely, by the way - profits up!)

Your dune challenge...

There's no other store like them, so get a bit DJ's with existing clients. They know you, they love you, so today, show an existing client some more ways they can invest in their partnership with you.

Don't lose sight of the Tar-je message though - tempting as it is to focus on how much cheaper you are, creating think-price-first mindsets in your customer group is a slippery slope. Focus on quality - product, service, you.

The ocean glance...

As a guy that runs a lot of workshops, I had to admire the way the panel was probed by facilitator Leigh McClusky. Her questioning, to get the panel saying the things the audience was interested in, demonstrated a bucketload of homework had been done. If you're going to ask great questions of your audience, don't go in blindly. Do some research!

(Speaking of research, thank you to my hosts, the clever folk at Square Holes!)

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Three for free

"A free lunch is only found in mousetraps."

John Capozzi

3 free experiences I had this past week;

- A restaurateur relaunching his business, offering a free come-try-our-new-menu lunch to a group of networked colleagues. Implied cost - if you like it, tell others, and come back to spend (*I did, I have and I will - beautiful food at XO Tapas in Hutt St!*)
- Two young ladies walking around the football oval signing people up for a free raffle (win a football). Even though it was free, people were still reluctant. Unspoken potential cost - after the draw, they'll sell my details to a timeshare holiday place who will harangue me in the middle of dinner. I don't need a football that badly.
- Some clever professionals donating time & wisdom to speak at a forum I'm building. The cost of taking this free help - expose & endorse the generous parties (they didn't ask, but I feel obligated and want to), owe them a favour, create a forum worthy of their presence. Worth those costs and more.

Free comes with different costs.

Your dune challenge...

Think of what you can offer your clients for free this week, then decide what you're actually asking them to pay.

Do they understand the unspoken cost? Are they willing (or able) to pay it? Is your free stuff worth more to them than the cost? If you give it away and they don't pay, what has it cost you? How much do you need to recoup for the 'free' offer to have paid for itself?

The ocean glance...

Free can be cheesy, tacky, even sneaky. Or it can be value-adding, generously-sneak-previewing or a thanks-for-your-loyalty. The thing is though, it's never really free, for you or the recipient. Understand the costs, overt or implied, and make sure you're both willing and able to pay them!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Hot gardening bloke

"Get a sense of place - find out what makes your garden special."

Brendan Moar, *Dryspell Gardens*

More lady-eye-candy than Don Burke, the Lifestyle TV host transforms Aussie backyard disaster zones into functional, funky and eco-friendly Brendan Moar gardens.

Some sales wisdom gleaned from his approach to garden design;

- **Define the unique points** - what makes the space special? What's the soul of the garden that you want to preserve, dress up, make the most of?
- **Ask outcome-focused questions** - Brendan asks clients what they want to do in their garden before proposing any designs. Understand utility.
- **Be inspired, but don't copy** - to create something that's bold and unique (but fits with its surrounds), be imaginative around a clear theme
- **Stick to the vision** - once your plan is drawn, keep going back to it so you don't cry mid-process when things look like a construction site
- **Make it sustainable** - think about how the garden will look in 1 year. 3. 5. It's got your name on it - will it last?
- **Finishing touches make a difference** - plants in precisely the right place, sweeping the pavers, polishing the features - make the finished product look schmick.

Your dune challenge...

Do you understand your clients 'sense of place' - what makes them unique and special? Can your solution help them enhance it, preserve it, capitalise on it? Ask questions to get a better understanding, then let your creative juices flow - how can you give them something unique?

Back your judgment. If you know what you're doing is helping the client (but they can't yet see it), sit down and walk them through it for the 42nd time, but don't abandon your vision 1/2 way. It's been designed to last, right?

The ocean glance...

Moar takes his TV garden makeover clients to the factories where his eco-friendly products are made, showing them 'the bigger picture'. They then have stories to go with their garden to share with friends. Do your clients have a service story about *you* to share with friends? Give them one today!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Focus group questioning

"I refuse to answer that question on the grounds that I don't know the answer."

Douglas Adams

Professor of Integrated Marketing Communications Martin Block trains researchers in conducting focus group interviews. He says when you get your participants in a room;

- Start discussion in an unstructured way around the general subject area (if the focus topic is 'why the Aussies lost the fifth Test', kick off some general cricket chat)
- Gradually funnel discussion into more specific areas, asking increasingly niched questions ("*why do you think they didn't play a spinner?*").
- Group questions about a specific subject together and exhaust the subject before moving onto the next. Avoid jumping around.
- Avoid questions that embarrass or place people on the defensive. If there's a sensitive topic to be addressed, save it until later in the session.
- Avoid leading questions - you want candor, so use unbiased language.
- Keep questions simple and conversational - it's not an inquisition.

Your dune challenge...

As a professional questioner, apply focus group interview technique with a client you'll visit today. Start conversation broadly, then hone your questions into the particular area that you think you can help the client with.

Dig as deeply as you can to understand their situation (without annoying them), and consider how your client might interpret your question (could it make them sound foolish or ignorant?). Keep it happy and conversational - make the process enjoyable!

The ocean glance...

Block says focus groups shouldn't overreach in terms of how much they can uncover in one session. Participant attention spans and willingness to cooperate only stretch so far. Don't try selling your whole kit bag to the client today -build bit by bit!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

Business-to-Business Marketing Research, M. Block & T. Block, Thomson, USA, 2005.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Blow on the embers

"Harley and Rose, they just lost it for a while..."

The Black Sorrows

There's a client you have - been together for a while now. When you established the partnership, it was all shiny, new and exciting. They gave you money, you gave them a great solution. You kept in touch regularly, adding value and supporting them post-purchase.

Then somewhere along the way, the magic disappeared. Call frequency dipped, reasons to contact them dried up, a tiff over something not going swimmingly, they were too busy to see you that Thursday, and you hear that another fresh-faced supplier is courting, roses and chocolates in arms.

Is this the end (my lonely friend?) That's up to you.

Your dune challenge...

Reflect on what ignited the partnership passion way back when. When you understood them, what they wanted, how they wanted it. Do you understand how their situation has changed? Have you kept asking questions (or is familiarity breeding assumptions?) Are you bringing the same energy and enthusiasm to the table?

Start again. Book some time to discuss what's most important to them these days, where their challenges are, what they now want to achieve. Thank them for all their support to date, and look for fresh new ways to show them why choosing you again will be a great ROI. You don't get the business by default - you've got to keep earning it.

The ocean glance...

In the song, Rose was *"thinkin' of another... she did not see him disappear."* Pay attention to those closest to you - your best clients. Don't daydream about the next sale at the expense of those who've paid for your support... stop them disappearing!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

(Joe Camilleri and a misquoted Jim Morrison in one Beach Run... new obscure personal best!)

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Rounding out the Top 10...

Which clients make the finals?

We love lists that rank like things. Fortune's 500. The AFL ladder. Take 40 Australia.

Some are *objective* (largest employers in your field, highest reported profits). You make the Olympic finals based on milliseconds, not how loud the crowd cheers for you. Other lists are *subjective* (like *20 to 1's* greatest movie villains). Anthill magazine just listed its top 10 Aussie TV commercials of all time (atop, VB's original "*Matter of fact, I've got it now...*"). Not based on how much money the ads made, but which were, according to editors, 'most memorable'.

If I asked you for an objective list this morning - your top 10 revenue generating clients over the past 12 months - would it roll off your tongue? What about a subjective list - the 10 clients most likely to grow in 2010, or to need your help... do you know?

Your dune challenge...

Build two lists this week. If they're already built, review and rewrite them.

The first, objective. Your top 10 best clients by volume, revenue or profit over the past 12 months. What can you do to keep them there? To leverage more business from them (or referrals or WOM?) Are they getting a time and effort investment from you proportionate to their spend?

The second, subjective. Your top 10 rising stars / special cases / invest-for-the-future accounts. Why are they on the list? How will you test and measure their progress? If it's not for immediate coin, what do you want to see from them over coming months (and how will you inspire it?)

The ocean glance...

Anthill's list mentioned some 'also-ran's' - ads that were great (like Yellow Pages "*Not happy, Jan!*"), but missed the cut. Subjective choices are the fodder of front-bar debates the world over - can you justify why a client *hasn't* made your top ten 'get-my-best-efforts' list?

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Birds, bees and worms

"Never cut a tree down in the wintertime. Never make a negative decision in the lowtime.

Wait. Be patient. The storm will pass. The spring will come."

Robert Schuller

Welcome to the season of new life, regeneration, **sprouts** and **buds** and promise.

Were sales pickings leaner for you over the colder months, with the economy or staff challenges or your own motivation and activity levels flagging to stunt your sales growth?

Did you spend it hibernating indoors drinking coffee? Occasionally lazing, not exercising positive sales disciplines, and put on a winter coat of flabby habits (that will slow you down against leaner, hungrier competitors)?

Maybe you got creative and fast to stay warm, trying new client service and support initiatives, staying extra close to those giving you business and endorsements and turning over one more rock? Maybe you overtook competition, enjoying record sales in times others struggled to eat?

Whatever you did, today's the perfect day to reflect on it, change it, capitalise on it or repeat it for a mighty Spring result.

Your dune challenge...

Take 10 minutes and audit your Sales Winter. What did you do well, that energised you, helped your clients, pushed you out of your comfort zone and generated a positive sales outcome? Maintain the momentum - build more of it into your Spring plan.

What did you get lax with? Be honest - where have hungrier competitors moved forward while you watched? What can you learn, and how will you apply it to help your clients and business today? Make a change (it's Spring, anything's possible!)

The ocean glance...

On the penultimate day of winter in our garden, my daughter dug up worms (*"There's millions, Dad! It must be worm season!"*). As she marveled at the proliferation of life, I dug up soursob weeds (everywhere). Sales opportunities are ahead, but so is competition for them. Keep feeding sales through activity and weeding out bad habits through disciplines!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

What Coke forgot

"More people prefer the taste of Pepsi."

Pepsi's assertion from the Pepsi Challenge

Global cola market share - Coke 82%; Pepsi 16%

ROAM Data, 2003

On April 23rd 1985, the most famous brand in the world got it horribly wrong.

The executive team at the 100-year-old Coca Cola Corporation decided to mess with the formula. 200,000 consumer taste tests had told them consumers would prefer a new, improved tasting soft drink. And so they released 'New Coke'.

It flopped spectacularly.

Within 3-months, unrelenting protests from the Coke faithful forced CEO Robert Goizueta to front a press conference, apologise unreservedly to the American people, and announce that the original flavour was back.

Analysts suggest that changing the flavour of Coke missed the point. The taste of Coca Cola was unique, mentally associated with happy times in people's lives, childhood experiences, reliability.

If market share says your cash cow isn't broken...

Your dune challenge...

Before Spring cleaning and reinventing your sales approach, list the non-negotiables that you won't touch. The things your clients have grown to love about you, to rely upon. That are synonymous with you - service. Tweak and improve where it's warranted, but don't mess too much with 'the real thing'.

The ocean glance...

It took 100 years to build the loyalty that made the response to their change-the-formula decision so vehement. But when the masses spoke, it took only 3 months to get back to the original game plan (staggeringly fast when you consider the size of their business). When clients speak loudly, move fast - or they'll move off silently!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

Oliver, T. *The Real Coke, the real story*. Random House, USA, 1986.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Me, not your shoes

I am the most important person in the world.

In a coffee shop this week waiting for my guest, I observed a man at the next table ask a question of their co-sipper.

As their colleague began answering, the questioner looked down at their shoes. Then over at the door as someone walked in. Then briefly at me, then back to their coffee, then they rummaged to get their diary out of their bag. This was clearly a business meeting, and the two were either colleagues or customer and supplier.

Distractions in coffee shop meetings abound, but having the discipline to make and maintain eye contact, nod appropriately, *really* listen and grant your focused attention is the highest compliment you can pay others.

No, actually, it's the least you can do.

You asked them a question!

Your dune challenge...

It's not painful. You know it's important. Ignore that bird sitting on the window ledge or the ambulance screaming past. Even if you don't like what you hear... look the other person in the eye when you speak with them. Make them feel like the most important person in the world for 10 minutes. Every conversation.

The ocean glance...

When salespeople ask a question, before the client even answers, the temptation is to start thinking of the next question to ask or pitch to deliver. The mightiest sales professionals I've seen have the confidence to put their own agenda (follow-up questions, spiel) to one side and listen like ninjas. Write questions or prompts on your pad if you're concerned about forgetting them... but look at your client and listen to them!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Starbucks wisdom

"I am saving up for a hooker, weed, wine and a steak dinner. Can you spare a dollar?"

Sign held by homeless man standing outside Starbucks.

He got \$5 in 20 minutes.

Mark Tewart is a US sales trainer and author of the cringe-worthy new *How to be a sales superstar* (I know...).

Sitting in a Starbucks one day, he observed what was going on around him and pulled out 3 sales lessons;

- **Ask for the business** - the homeless man above, no-one was really reading his sign. His sales pitch is, err, perhaps not as compelling as yours. But he asked! Over and over. And he got.
- **It's not the money** - you can get coffee at much cheaper places than Starbucks. Probably better tasting as well. Convenience, brand, the experience - people will pay a slight premium for (having just run through my Cibo receipts, I'll vouch for that).
- **Change the process** - Tewart observed people running all over the place, the pace of our world ever-increasing. He concluded that if you can change a process to speed things up or slow things down for customers, they'll pay.

Your dune challenge...

Today, ask for the business. For a chance to help. To become the supply partner of the person that seemed to love what you just showed them. They might say no... so go ask someone else. Surely what you're offering is better than the homeless bloke?

Don't discount to death - if they really like what you have, if it's fixing their problem or stroking their ego and they can afford it, ask for the price that you've previously set at a fair level.

The ocean glance...

The things I do for you, subjecting myself to the cheesiest sales books so you don't have to... Tewart's book unashamedly rebadges collective sales wisdom with the All-American-Trainer flavour. The thing is though... the principles are great. The action steps proven. Much of the content is cracking... just got to put prejudices aside and get past the fluff!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

How to be a sales superstar, M Tewart, Wiley, NJ, 2009. **Recommended.**

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Father of the bride

"You are all beautiful friends and family, and we feel so blessed that you came here tonight."

The bride's father

I was privileged to attend a beautiful Italian wedding on Saturday (just 1,100 people). Full of sales lessons on planning, execution and how to look after guests (aka clients), three of the best came from the father of the bride in his speech.

- **Specific gratitude** - naming all the destinations guests had traveled from, the bride's father thanked people profusely for making time in their busy lives to spend with his family. 1,100 people felt appreciated.
- **Multi-lingual** - he thanked guests in both English and Italian to make sure the message got to all.
- **Genuine emotion** - no speech notes, just lots of gesticulating and tears and words of admiration for everyone from his daughter to the caterers. It wasn't polished, but it was embraced by the crowd because it was real.

Your dune challenge...

Be specific in your thanks to a client today. For ten minutes of their busy time, for granting you the privilege of serving them, for keeping you involved in their business.

Use a tongue they'll understand. Talk in their terms, at their level, in the style they like to receive information.

And while I wouldn't advocate tears, don't shy away from expressing real human emotion in sales conversations. If you're chuffed with an order, show it. If you dropped the ball on something, express genuine remorse. Professionalism is great, but too much polish and robotic emotional detachment isn't appealing.

The ocean glance...

You'd think it impossible to make a wedding that big feel like an intimate affair - but it did. The venue and hospitality was spectacular, but it was the heartfelt words in the speeches that made everyone feel part of a family for a night. Give clients that same feeling - everyone craves it!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Somatic markers

When I say "German Engineering", what do you think of?

Martin Lindstrom is a clever marketer, lectures to a million people each year and wrote the great *Buy.Ology*.

In his research-rich book about how purchasing choices are shaped, he touches on Somatic markers. The Somatic marker theory suggests that our past experiences imprint in our brain, leaving little flags that we recall when we're making new decisions. We see an oven and instantly know not to touch the glass door because we did that once when we were younger and burnt our fingers. These mental shortcuts are leveraged by marketers and advertisers - for example, the use of puppies to advertise toilet paper (because puppies conjure up childhood memories of softness and security and toilet training); German phrases in VW and Audi's car ads because we associate German cars with quality craftsmanship. The advertising reminds us of a memory and the feelings we associate with it.

What somatic markers do your clients carry, and what flags are you leaving in their minds?

Your dune challenge...

Think about the experiences that customers in your market have had, both positive and negative. What somatic markers have they had implanted by past suppliers? Is it that their poor supply experiences have come from unkempt, loud, overbearing supply reps who didn't follow up promptly? Have the positives come from the fast-to-return-calls, happy smiling faces, shiny shoes and great questioners?

Think about the flag you'd like to leave in a client's head - the next time they see the name Troy in print, what will they think? Define what you want it to be, then figure out what you can do today to get them thinking it.

The ocean glance...

It is proposed that the most powerful somatic markers are those linked with fear. So what scares your client - a bad purchasing decision, throwing money away, wasting time, an angry conversation? How do you think they picture this fear in their head? Now give them the opposite - show them how you can take the scary pictures away!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

Buy.Ology, M Lindstrom, Random House, New York, 2008.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

400 years

Been there, done that, got the scars to prove it.

I drove past a church school yesterday that's got a big new sign out front - "400 years of global experience". Not at this campus, but from its parent group's educational origins abroad.

Why advertise how old you are? (my wife tells me she's trying to forget... oww!)

Maybe;

- 400 years worth of people thought we had something valuable enough to keep us in business this long (market forces would have crushed us if we weren't great at what we do)
- We've done plenty wrong, but we took the hits, learnt from them and improved (and we know where the traps for young players are)
- We've got long-term perspective (so when you're running around thinking about short-term worries, we're keeping an eye on the horizon for you)
- Because it makes us seem less scary, less risky, more trustworthy than the Johnny-come-lately's
- Because your problems, goals and dreams, while always unique, won't be completely foreign to us

Your dune challenge...

Whether you've been in your business for 3 months or 30 years, you will have accumulated experience and wisdom. Share it with current and prospective clients today.

Take 10 minutes to review where your positive track record lies, how you've helped others and what your scars have taught you in your time in the job. Now advertise it in a sales conversation - "*One of the ways we recently helped a client in a similar situation was to One of the things we learnt was ...*".

Less scary. Older. Wiser.

The ocean glance...

The somatic marker flipside to "older".... stodgier. More conservative. Inflexible. By all means point to a track record that says "*we know what we're doing...*", but counterbalance it with "*... and we're constantly looking for new, better ways to help our clients.*" And the most youthful way to find them? Ask questions like a 5-year old. Young brain in old scone!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Impactful presentations

"I have a dream...."

Dr Martin Luther King

In their book *Personal Impact*, the trainers from Speak First Presentation Skills give some simple tips for delivering words that stick.

- **Repeat your key message** - Dr King used his immortal line several times in one speech
- **Antithesis** - Provide a contrast for listeners ("*Our apples aren't the biggest, but they are the tastiest*")
- **Tripling** - Apply the rule of three to your key points ("*We help sales professionals focus, grow and excel!*")
- **Alliteration** - Make the first letter of key words the same ("*We'll smash September's sales*"; "*The darkest days have disappeared*")
- **Anecdotes** - Stories paint pictures - rather than "*Our clients love their ShamWow*", consider "*Fred Jones tried our ShamWow on his 1969 red Ford Mustang and said*"

Your dune challenge...

Try at least one of the above in a sales presentation you'll deliver today.

Go on - it'll pique interest, provoke imagination and provide impact!

The ocean glance...

Of course, this is great if you actually have something useful to say to your client. And the best way to find out? Yep. Questions. Check if you're on track, if what you're saying is relevant, if it makes sense. Top talk tip - take the audiences temperature throughout!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

Personal Impact, Vickers, Bavister & Smith, Pearson, Great Britain, 2009.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Happy memory moments

"I remember when rock was young... Me and Suzie had so much fun..."

Guy with big glasses

Today (11/9) is carved in our memories for sad reasons. Like when you heard Princess Diana died, you probably remember where you were and who you were with.

The same goes for happy memories and the people you associate with them. I vividly recall the first kid to congratulate me after kicking a goal in a Junior Colts game at Kalangadoo football oval (I didn't kick many). The teacher's smile when he handed me back a math test I perfect-scored in Grade 7. The builder we sipped wine with over the kitchen table as we excitedly discussed our renovation plans. The Obstetrician's lame attempt at humour before she delivered our first daughter.

Have you helped, or been there to congratulate, a client as they built a lasting happy memory moment?

Your dune challenge...

Consider the best thing that could happen in your best client's life or business this year. Can you help make it happen? If it's about to happen, how can you support or congratulate or add even more to their moment?

Plan to stand out. To be forever linked with a positive moment. It's a powerful sales support.

The ocean glance...

The football kid, the teacher, the builder, the OB - none of them were necessarily outstanding in other ways. But I'll always think fondly of them and even recommended them to others because the memory of the moment is so positive, they must've been great (right?)! Be there and add to a client's Christmas morning!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Running a tight ship

Take a ride on the Am-I-Really-Busy Perspective Bus...

My team went country this weekend, and we visited some wonderful rural friends that have 10 kids (the eldest is just 13). Pick up your jaw. Aside from managing a chaotic farmhouse, she's studying undergraduate Medicine (requiring 3-4 hours travel each day to and from the city) and he owns a busy electrician business employing six blokes.

3 time management tips I gleaned from masters over a roast lunch;

- **Get a system** - there are rosters on the fridge(s) with times and tasks that all the kids have to follow. Too much to remember, so it's on display.
- **Incentivise for action** - after the nagging got too much, a \$4 bounty was offered to the child that cleaned their room the fastest & most comprehensively
- **Every 5 minutes can achieve something** - the 9-year old told me *"At 8:15am, my job is to wipe the bathroom sinks, and then we're off to school."*

Your dune challenge...

I know you're clever and the stuff you need to do today is clear in your head... humour me, write the tasks down. Free that valuable neuronal real estate up for the client challenges and the new opportunities that *will* present themselves. Give yourself a time support scaffold.

The 10 minute block you're using to read your emails right now... can you shrink it to 5? What can you do with that extra 5 minutes? Maybe map and prioritise the tasks you need to complete by hometime? Or call one more client? Incentivise yourself - *"If I get these 3 things knocked over by 5pm, I'm treating myself to a (insert guilty pleasure here)"*.

The ocean glance...

After lunch, our friends got the eldest two to hide lollies in the garden for the younger kids and ours to find. It's a house of noise and efficiency and delegation and schedules... but they make the effort to inject spontaneity and fun along the way. It *is* an effort, but the time goes fast - are you planning to have fun today?!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

4 kinds of pleasure

It's always a pleasure doing business with you...

CEO of the Contemporary Trends Institute, Dr Patrick Jordan's book *How to make brilliant stuff that people love* draws on Anthropology Professor Lionel Tiger's insight into human pleasure. Tiger says there are four different types of pleasure humans can experience;

- **Physio pleasure** - to do with our senses; how something feels good to look at, feel, taste, hear or smell
- **Socio pleasure** - to do with our relationships; how something improves our interactions with others, elevates our status or image
- **Psycho pleasure** - to do with our mental reactions; how something makes us feel smarter or reduces stress or is emotionally satisfying
- **Ideo pleasure** - to do with our preferences, values and aspirations; how we like something in red, how it fits with our religious beliefs, how we prefer carbon-neutral suppliers

Jordan contends that understanding what pleases your customer is the first step to making brilliant stuff people love.

Your dune challenge...

Before your next sales conversation, ask yourself "*Do I understand, and have I shown, how my sales offering can tick each of this client's four pleasure boxes?*"

Have they felt how physically fantastic what you have to offer is? Are they conscious of how it will improve their relationships or stroke their social ego? Can they see the mental pleasure they'll get taking you on as a supplier (less stress / more satisfaction)? And do you have it with green racing stripes ('cause that's what this client likes)?

The ocean glance...

(Keep it clean...) My pleasure boxes look different to yours. So do your clients. To demonstrate what a pleasure it will be doing business with you, you first need to know their idiosyncrasies and pleasure points. Observe, study, ask them... figure out what will please your clients before showcasing your wares!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

How to make brilliant stuff that people love, P. Jordan, Wiley, England 2002.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Hold yourself on the hook

"I attribute my success to this - I never gave or took any excuse."

Florence Nightingale

I stuffed something up the other day, and a client rightfully sent me a please-explain note. In the scheme of things, it wasn't a big deal. But at the time, for them and me, it was.

It was one of those moments you feel sick to your stomach for dropping the ball, letting someone down and not living up to the lofty expectations you set for yourself.

When I got the client's email, my kneejerk desire was to shoot one back explaining my buts and reasons and to justify and excuse myself. But that's not what rightfully-annoyed clients want. To be heard, to be acknowledged to be right, to be apologised to and to have things fixed - that's what a valuable supply partner can do.

The humble pie is slowly digesting - I'm the supplier, it was my bad. I don't ever want that feeling again, but it's vital to fight the urge to say "But...".

Your dune challenge...

Every sales professional messes up (if you haven't, you're lying or not paying attention). If there was anything you could have done to prevent it, it was your fault. Even if the client is a jerk, shoulder burden. Even if they're your best mate and would understand if you explained your way out of it, take full responsibility. Resist the but.

Move fast, listen fully, apologise specifically, explain how you'd like to proceed to rectify things and ask for their blessing. Then fix it.

The ocean glance...

I equate that sick feeling to the nausea that newly expectant mothers get (old wives wisdom: *"That means everything's going well, dear!"*). The alternative feelings are dull numbness or sensing nothing at all (in which case, say goodbye to the nice client, Gracie!). It's not a nice feeling, but it's a sign you give a damn and hold yourself to a high standard. Make a correction and get pedaling again!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

Tough questions

"I pity the fool that gets this interviewer"

Mr T in HR

Paul Falcone heads up HR at Nickelodeon (home of Spongebob). His insightful book, *96 great interview questions*, offers three 'pressure-cooker' interview questions the hard-nosed might ask;

- "Tell me about your last performance appraisal. In which area were you most disappointed?"
- "In hindsight, how could you have improved your performance at your last position?"
- "Where did you disagree with your boss most often? How did you handle the last time they were wrong and you were right?"

Ooof.

Your dune challenge...

Don't wait for a career change to consider these questions - answer them for yourself now.

The first - are you conscious of your professional Achilles heel, and are you actively working to improve or splint it?

The second - what have you learnt from past jams, and are you willing to accept responsibility for what's happened?

The third - do you have any emotional lightning rods, what are you doing to insulate them, can you remain objective and have you got sufficient conciliatory skills to defuse conflict?

The ocean glance...

Falcone says great interviewers shouldn't make the process too stressful, but there is a place for the occasional stressful question like those above. Your clients, colleagues, suppliers and boss will stress-test you... are you ready to have your mettle tested today?!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

Falcone, P. *96 Great Interview Questions*, Amacom, USA, 2009.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Tick tock

"Time is the only commodity that matters. You can't get it back."

Professor Randy Pausch

My hours were invested yesterday writing the next MIGHTY White Paper, all about time and time management (hardest part has been making the time...).

There's a bloke that gets a bit of page space, but perhaps not enough. Randy Pausch, late author of *The Last Lecture*, is the Carnegie Mellon Computer Science Professor who 3 years ago was diagnosed with terminal Pancreatic Cancer. With a young wife, 3 very young kids and just months to live, Pausch very quickly become an expert at making the most of our one finite commodity.

3 of his thoughts that haven't made the paper;

- "Understand the difference between doing things right and doing the right things. Most things are pass / fail - don't get too bogged down in the details, make sure your time is spent doing the important stuff adequately."
- "Experience comes with time, with knocks, and there are no shortcuts (it's why we pay for it). So get busy collecting experience."
- "Procrastination is the thief of time. If you push things to the deadline, that's when the stress comes. Don't give yourself an ulcer - do it in advance. Do it now."

Your dune challenge...

Are you spit-polishing a small proposal when there's a mega-client that could use a little agricultural service? Are your energies tied to the truly important things?

The client you just invested time and energy in that's seemingly amounted to bubkis - what can you mine from the experience? What lesson have you just paid for?

Lastly, why wait? Permission? Sunshine? A flash of inspiration? You don't have time - start now. The proposal, the cold phone call, the research, the training course, the questioning - don't wait.

The ocean glance...

As poignant as the messages for me was the messenger. Pausch said "*Don't lose sight of the power of inspiration*". Find someone who inspires you today - a colleague, a client, a family member - and let their wisdom / behaviours / success give you goose bumps. Then, take a leaf and get moving to apply it!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Spy on the champs

"If you want to be the best, find out who the best are and what they're doing.

The best at the time was Port, so we started watching them train."

Tom Zorich, Central Districts Football Club

Central Districts just qualified for its tenth straight SANFL Grand Final (for non-Adelaidiens, that's the local Aussie Rules Football competition. For Glenelg supporters, deepest sympathies). Journalist Scott Walsh offers some great insight into how this dynasty of success began.

Nights before the 1999 Grand Final (which Central's weren't playing in), their President Les Stevens and his deputy Zorich went and watched the league's then-dominant team, Port Adelaide, train at their suburban oval. Zorich - *"Their fitness levels and competitiveness shone out straight away. There was no molly-coddling the players, or any of that cr*p."*

The coaching, training, recruiting and cultural changes that stemmed from that eureka moment sees Central's now just one game from winning eight flags in a single decade.

Not the best, but want to be? Watch how the best do it.

Your dune challenge...

Who is the greatest sales professional in your industry? The one clients rave about, buy more from? Sales managers - who recruits and retains and get the best from their list, backing it with amazing sales numbers?

Go watch them train. If they're giving a talk or working a trade display, watch what they do. Ask clients what they love about them. If they're giving a Rainmaker interview, read it. If the best happens to be in your own team, go ride with them, ask them questions, take notes.

The ocean glance...

To bridge the fractured relationship that existed between the club administrators and the players, then-coach Peter Jonas went to the board and said *"What can we do to get us out of this?"* Zorich - *"Music to my ears, all of a sudden we were using we, not !!"* There are others that will help you - just have to ask. Don't think "me", recruit your "we"!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

Walsh, S. *How Bulldogs turned disaster into dynasty*, The Sunday Mail, 20/9/09.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Fasting

To appreciate something, give it up.

Yesterday marked the end of the Islamic holy month of Ramadan. Throughout Ramadan, Muslims forgo eating and drinking during daylight hours. This sacrifice is said to concentrate focus on prayer and reflection.

The end of Ramadan is usually celebrated with a joyous feast called Eid al-Fitr, and life goes back to normal.

Judaism, Christianity and Hinduism all have fasting festivals. Give something up to focus your mind, reflect and give thanks. Then celebrate at the end.

Respectfully, is there a place for 'sales fasting'?

Your dune challenge...

What could you give up for a month that would sharpen your focus on amazing sales and customer service behaviours? Calling into the office on a Tuesday afternoon to do paperwork and have a coffee? Surfing the net for sport scores during your lunch hour (instead replacing it with researching something useful for a client)? The habit of starting at 9:30am on Thursdays because you put in extra on Mondays?

Give up a small professional luxury for a defined window of time and concentrate your mighty sales habits. Do it as a team. Then, have a party when it's over - celebrate and take pride in your discipline and the results it will have achieved!

The ocean glance...

Fasting has becoming a popular charity fundraising vehicle. From the 40-hour famine to Dry July and Oc-sober, giving something up doesn't just have to be all about you. Who else stands to benefit from your luxury-sales-habit fast? Use them as motivation to keep your fasting cadence consistent!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Accelerated WOM

You've just got to try these guys...

Small businessperson and professional communicator, Mary Morel's *Talk up your business* gives practical tips for generating word-of-mouth business fast;

- **Make sure all client-accessible information is current and clear** - is your website up-to-date? Do all current clients know everything you have to offer (so they can purchase or recommend it)?
- **Spend 30 minutes each day keeping in touch** - make how-are-you phone calls to clients you've not seen lately, write cards, send a let's-do-coffee email to business contacts.
- **Treat first and special customers extraordinarily well** - apart from the fact they've paid for it, they are the ones who'll most readily spruik for you and buy more.
- **Kick the referral ball off** - if you know great suppliers, tell others (and tell the supplier you've told others). Mutual reciprocity law - they'll want to do it back.
- **Ask** - simple (but scary) - if you're confident you're doing a great supply job, ask for the opportunity to do it for a client's friend.

Your dune challenge...

Bolster your personal sales efforts by recruiting a word-of-mouth sales army. Ensure all your clients are clear on every sales way you can help. The clients who spend more or have been around longer - give them extra reasons to blow your trumpet (offer first dibs on specials, Tuesday morning sticky bun runs, drop in a relevant article you saw in the paper).

Broadcast the name of another supplier you think might help clients, and keep the supplier posted on your advertising efforts (ensuring they know what's in your bag so they can return the favour). Finally - ask. *"I'm looking to grow my business and help more people with this product / service you're enjoying - do you know someone ...?"*

The ocean glance...

Most sales professionals recognise the importance of seeking and asking for referral and WOM business. Reason it doesn't get done more... *"I forget"*. Don't. Write it down. Include it in your pre-call plan checklist that you review before every sales conversation. Bold text in the Blackberry next to the appointment. It creates exponential business - get your sales army talking!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day

(and if you have friends you think would love these daily emails, please let them or me know! :-)

M Morel, *Talk up your business*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 2005.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Winning conservatively

"People think of Rio as being conservative.

This is not accurate - we adopt risk-aware approaches to value creation."

Rio Tinto 2002 Annual Report

The First XI studies the success of top Australian organisations, including Rio Tinto, Qantas, Telstra, Woolworths, even The Salvation Army. The researchers identified a number of traits common to these 11 successful groups. One standout was being conservative, which showed itself in 3 ways;

- **Strategically conservative** - They stick to their knitting, doing what they've always done well, trying new things but not moving too far away from their winning traditions.
- **Operationally conservative** - Their leaders view the business as 'my business' rather than just treating funds as 'the money of a big corporation'. They also look to share risk with partners wherever possible.
- **Financially conservative** - They are very concerned about costs, and don't wish to expose themselves to unnecessary financial risks.

Your dune challenge...

To be strategically conservative, do you *know* what's generated your personal sales success over the past 1/3/10 years? If there's something you're doing well that is resulting in customers choosing you as a supplier... keep doing it!

To be operationally conservative, do you view your sales portfolio as *your own business* (just operating under the umbrella of your employer)? Adapt a business owner's mindset - would you try that sales approach if it was your business?

To be financially conservative, consider your costs. Not just the money you're spending on coffee's and guest speakers, but your time cost. If you're spending it with a client, is it generating the return you want (or could you get a better return spending it with someone else?) Be cost conscious.

The ocean glance...

As interesting was what they *didn't* find in these 11 businesses. No Big Hairy Audacious Goals, only one Vision statement, no really charismatic leaders and none had built their success on a single 'breakthrough' idea. Hard work, balance, good systems, great people, lots of planning and constant high cadence in executing. Hard to argue with... take a leaf from the Salvo's today!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day

Hubbard, Samuel, Cocks & Heap, *The First XI*, Wiley & Sons, Milton Q 2007.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Cold feet

"Nobody calls me a chicken, Needles. Nobody!"

Marty McFly

3 nights ago, my eldest told me about something bothering her at school. I asked if she wanted me to speak to the teacher. *"No, it's OK Dad, I'll do it, first thing in the morning."* As I walked her to class the next day, I asked again about approaching the teacher. An uncertain look - *"No, I'm sure it will be fine, I don't think I'll worry about it."* By the time we got to the door - *"No, it's no big deal, forget it"*.

Ever had one of those moments? When the motivation to act on something, to fix a pain or seek a pleasure, is really strong? And if you don't act on it straight away (or have prodding reminders to keep your intentions burning front of mind), the will to act evaporates?

The act seems scarier, riskier, harder when the motivation is blurry or dulled by time.

Your dune challenge...

Something will come up today that will motivate you to act. I'm not talking about giving someone a spray, but a challenge with a client (*"This is giving me grief - I must speak to the boss about getting this back-order situation sorted!"*) or an opportunity (*"Wow! That business I saw in the paper this morning would be perfect for my stuff! I must call them today!"*).

Do 1 of 3 things. Act immediately (while the motivational branding iron is still sizzling). Second, write a clear scheduled time in your diary to act, and reinforce it with a note about the amazing outcome you'll achieve doing it (*11:00am - Call Joe Blow - my next new 10K / month widget customer*).

Third, do nothing. Lose the opportunity. And let the pain of regret (chicken) remind you not to let chances slide again.

The ocean glance...

Mary Quant, inventor of the mini-skirt - *"Risk it, go for it. The more you do, the more you do, the more you do! It's very important to take enormous risks."* Run the risk that comes with acting fast on your motivations. Might blow up, but you only really regret the things you *don't* do!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

The entrepreneurial perspective

"My experience has shown that the people who are exceptionally good in business aren't so because of *what* they know, but because of their insatiable need to *know more*."

Michael Gerber, *The E Myth*

Michael Gerber's famous book gives a perspective on what it takes to succeed in business. He says there are 3 little people living in the heads of all businesspeople that need to be kept in balance;

- **The Entrepreneur** - the dreamer, the goal setter, the one who can see opportunity in challenges, always asking 'what-if', thinking about client needs and how they can be satisfied in future.
- **The Manager** - the pragmatist, the one creating order and structure, the rule-setter, the one who sees the problems and cleans up the mess the entrepreneur makes.
- **The Technician** - the doer, the worker, the results generator.

Vision, structure and activity. The problem - all 3 want to be boss. But none wants to *have* a boss. Know your bias, and find a way to balance them to succeed.

Your dune challenge...

Let all 3 little voices take to the soapbox for equal periods today. The Entrepreneur - what do you want to achieve in this impending sales call? Today? This week? Before Christmas? Where are there opportunities begging to be grabbed? (Go on, grab one!).

The Manager - what systems, prods, structures do you need to help remind you, keep you focused and disciplined? A prioritised to-do list? A customer database? A pre-call plan checklist? Lend your entrepreneur a disciplined hand.

Finally, the Technician. Roll up your sleeves - no-one else is going to. Get busy. Make the call. Write the email. Finish the tender. Do one more thing than you want to - it will make a difference.

The ocean glance...

Gerber - "*To the technician, the customer is a problem, never satisfied with what they have to offer. To the entrepreneur, the customer is the opportunity - they have needs that aren't being met... a chance to surprise them!*" Guess where the successful sales professional's bias lies. Surprise someone today!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

Gerber, M. *The E-Myth Revisited*, Harper Collins, New York, 1995.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Where it begins

"We're off to see the Wizard, the wonderful Wizard of Oz...

Because, because, because, because, because of the wonderful things he does!"

Testimonial, D. from Kansas

Mighty sales professionals have a smile on their face this morning.

Because their phone is ringing and quote requests and orders are flowing in.

Because happy clients are spreading the word.

Because they're doing the things that make their clients happy.

Because they got the chance to be a mighty service provider to someone.

Because they asked a question that invited a prospect to become a client.

Because they'd earned the right by offering the right solutions in the right way.

Because they'd asked the right questions that uncovered what the right solutions would be.

Because the client granted them the opportunity to ask about their needs.

Because they'd asked for the clients time.

Because they picked up the phone, knocked on the door or followed-up on the lead.

Because they found someone they kinda knew they could help.

Because

Your dune challenge...

Climb the list with a client. Look at where you want to be, then go one line below.

Taken care of that 'because' yet?

The ocean glance...

Stagnant sales calls also carry a *because*. Because the prospect isn't right (because you didn't qualify them, because you didn't do the right research...). Because they don't yet trust you (because you haven't demonstrated the right help in the right way, because you haven't asked the right questions...). Most sales *because's* can be fixed - you just need to step back to the one before it!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Cringe

"Hindsight is an exact science."

Guy Bellamy

The new Australian version of *The Apprentice* screened this week (Channel 9, compulsory sales viewing). An alpha pack of Mark-Bouris-wannabe's compete in sales challenges to see who has the right stuff to head his new company. After a mad sales scramble, contestants sweat in the boardroom and have their efforts critiqued. It's here that hindsight smacks many of them upside the head.

Carlton footballer and roving reporter Brendan Fevola knows something about hindsight.

If you've ever video taped a sales role-play, or sat in a tender loss debrief with a client, or just had a coulda-shoulda conversation in the car with your boss immediately after a sales call, you'll know the lessons hindsight can teach.

So why not seek more opportunities to learn from it each day?

Your dune challenge...

Employ a hindsight tutor today. Get a colleague to sit and listen to your phone appointing, then give you constructive criticism on your style and questions. Invite your boss or a marketing colleague to field ride with you, asking them for feedback on your performance with a client. Book a "how are we doing?" appointment with a loyal client, asking them for specifics about what they like and what else they'd like to see from you.

The ocean glance...

Q4 of 2009 starts tomorrow. Let your pre-Christmas sales results benefit from all the hindsight you've collected in the first 3/4 of the year. Take 20 minutes to reflect on the good, bad and ugly of early '09, and decide how clients can benefit from your hindsight MBA!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Apps

Wonder what that little red button does...

Ever heard of a Flesch-Kincaid score? It's a measure of how readable your writing is. It tells you how many years education a reader needs to understand your text. Good writers aim for scores under 10.*

Just go to the Tools menu in Microsoft Word, select "Options", "Spelling & Grammar" and "Show Readability Statistics". Now, every time you complete a spell-check, it'll tell you if you're being too puffy or nice & simple.

I've used Word for over 20 years and know only a fraction of its app's.**

If they can help me, I wish someone would sell them to me.

Your dune challenge...

Show a client a new app for the thing they bought from you last year. Explain a better way to use the technology or an extra feature that can give them a relevant benefit. Show how pushing the red button can save time, effort or money.

Got some attachable, upgradeable or complementary things that will enhance your clients experience? Show them today.

The ocean glance...

Most app's on your phone or computer are for other people. But some are for you. You just need to know they're there, what they do, and why that's useful to *you*. So does a client.

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

* I learnt about F-K scores in a great communications e-newsletter from the late Roger Fry – Vale and thank you Roger.

** *App's* - lazy-man-trying-to-be-digitally-hip way of saying 'applications'

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Control and perspective

See the goal, exercise the discipline.

David Allen is a productivity guru. Author of *Getting Things Done*, Allen says that to be highly productive, you need the right balance of *control* and *perspective*. Control - systems, disciplines, rules, order. Perspective - vision, goals, clarity, ideas. Allen says we all swing through four phases of the control:perspective matrix each day;

- *Low control / Low perspective* - **The Victim**. Kneejerk reacting, driven by short-term trends, scratching the obvious itches, wanting instant gratification.
- *High control / Low perspective* - **The Micro Manager**. Obsessed with details, containing order, neglecting longer term and never asking 'why?'
- *Low control / high perspective* - **The Crazy Maker**. Clever ideas that never stop, but making unrealistic commitments and continually shifting focus.
- *High control / high perspective* - **Master & Commander**. Can see the horizon while holding the wheel steady; firm but flexible. Big Picture / Details. The Beach Run.

Which quadrant are you in right now?

Your dune challenge...

Try spend as much time as you can being a Master & Commander today. Yes, you could knock off 1/2 hour early or delay seeing that needy client until next week. Or you could reinvent your client recording system today or spend 2 hours poring over sales figures.

Try a little of column A and a little of column B. Who in your business seems to be nailing this balance? What will it mean for you if you can nail it?

The ocean glance...

Allen says that you'll never spend a full day being Russell Crowe skippering the ship. The key is to be conscious of when you've slipped into a less productive quadrant, recognise where your imbalance lies, and control / perspective-up a bit! "*They go together like horse & carriage...*"

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

www.DavidAllenGTD.com - Thanks Andy from Uptime 100 for tipping me off!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Sell or help?

"Because salespeople don't fix your roof,
we don't employ them to give you a quote."

Radio ad for Utter Gutters

I heard that ad on the radio last week. It's a great perspective to consider.

Does the client want or need to be sold to?

Or do they need a tradesperson to ask the educated questions that uncover the source of pain, the clients vision of pleasure, and define clearly how they as suppliers can help the latter replace the former?

"Sales" is the vehicle we, as niche diagnosticians, use to find out if we can help, show how we can help, and facilitate the mutual-help transaction ('cause you can help me in return by paying... \$, word of mouth, personal satisfaction).

Sales is not just the outcome we strive for, it's the process we go through.

And it's certainly not something professionals 'do to someone'.

Your dune challenge...

Be a roofer today. Go in not with a desire to flog product, but to understand needs and wants. To be a consultant, an uncoverer, an educator, an advice provider, and if you can, an 'oasis-in-the-desert' describer.

Then offer a leg-up into the pleasure wagon - invite the client to exchange the fair price for your brand of help. Simple question, in your own words (without which it's all just *'you show me your's, I'll show you mine'*).

The ocean glance...

If Utter Gutters are training their roofers to ask the right questions in the right way, to be perceptive to how clients like to receive their information and to constantly look for one more person to help... I think they'll smash their numbers.

These are the basics that we sales professionals, in the absence of roofer training, have to nail to make up for not being tradies.

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Think we, not me

Help a client feel valued and connected.

Dr Michael Ungar is a Canadian Researcher who studies children and families around the world to understand what underpins emotional resilience.

Hearing him speak at a school last week, Dr Ungar said "*the younger that children are shown they are a vital part of a team (family), that their contribution counts, that they are empowered to do tasks important to the team (and that when they don't do them, they get to experience the unprotected pain of letting the team down), the more emotionally resilient they become. The path to building robust, socially responsible character is in encouraging kids to think 'we' as opposed to 'me' as early as possible, and as parents, giving them every chance to do that.*"

Constantly demonstrate a connection to the team; give them the tools and power to act, and show that you value their performance.

Your dune challenge...

Does every one of your clients feel like a connected member of team-you? How do they know it - what are you planning to do for them in the next week to remind them?

Have you given them enough information & training to feel confident to go it on their own? Empowered them? (Or made them feel helpless and reliant on you as the supplier to act in their best interest?)

When they kick a goal in their life or business, do you celebrate and pump up their tyres the way a family would? Could you? This week?

The ocean glance...

Ungar studies kids from Columbian drug-cartel affected areas, kids in the Masai Mara and well-to-do Hollywood kids. He says kids with responsibility for team contributions thrust on their shoulders early (tough love) are much less likely to indulge in 'undesirable' behaviours as those given no responsibilities, constant family contact or sense of team. Help a clients sales habits remain desirable - stay close, and thank them for their contribution!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

www.michaelungar.com

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Feedback or testimonial?

Are you fishing for compliments, or do you want something useful?

After running a workshop the other day, I sent out a feedback form. What did they like, what one thing could be altered / improved, are they happy for me to share their comments with others considering my services?

The first form that came back said mostly great things (I can *taste* the testimonial...). Then they offered some constructive feedback that I didn't like. Unbelievable. The presentation was perfect! (Wasn't it?)

Bruised ego aside, I could see an element of truth in their comments. And even if I couldn't see it, they obviously could (and *they* were the client). Now I can consider addressing it. Maybe wow them next time. At very least thank them for their candor - often hard to get.

I still *want* the compliments - validation to share with other prospective clients - but I *need* the feedback to improve the quality.

Your dune challenge...

The feedback you're asking clients for - are you ready for it? Do you just want gloss to add to the "*Here's what clients say..*" section of the brochure, or is this a chance to really understand and improve?

Ask. Be ready for things you might disagree with. Uncomfortable truths. Perspectives different to your own. Once you've got the feedback, you can decide if it's worth acting on (after you've massaged your own ego), but you have to ask openly first.

The ocean glance...

If you don't want to know, are powerless to act, or are worried it will open a can of worms you can't deal with, don't ask. Keep delivering same ol', same ol' service ('cause that's what's got you to this point). Just be ready to watch a competitor whizz by, because they had the courage to ask.

(And when someone comments on your professional warts? Thank them.)

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

One from the ladies

"Ginger Rogers did everything Fred Astaire did, but backwards and in high heels."

Dance critic

Pru Goward is the former head of the Australian Office of the Status of Women and author of *A business of your own*. Profiling past winners of the Telstra *Business Woman of the Year* award, Goward searched for common threads. Three interesting standouts;

- **They viewed all past work experiences as useful** - often the best opportunities came out of the worst experiences. Mary Foley, Mayne Nickless - *"The career leaps I've made came from dealing with a setback."*
- **They were firm in deciding what *wasn't* right for them** - Fiona Wright, *The Lobby* restaurants - *"I realised the previous 5 years had taught me not how not to do things - that taught me there are no bad experiences in life, you can learn from anything."*
- **Most were loners, few had professional mentors, but all asked lots of questions** - Sandra Phythian, GM, Tas Crays - *"I don't care if I look like an idiot, if I need to know, I ask. I have to be informed to make the right decision."*

Your dune challenge...

The shining moments and car crashes of your sales year-to-date... it's all useful and can help you in the remaining 55 selling days of '09. Audit it - what can you learn, what can you repeat, what needs avoiding?

Drop something you just know isn't right for you. A time burner, a presentation style you learnt in a training course, a habit you know is useless. Now it's gone... what positive sales discipline can you replace it with?

Ask. Decide what you need to know to help someone, and ask.

The ocean glance...

Goward asked these successful women how they defined success. Most used the term 'balance' - they wanted a balance in their work and life that worked for them, and that it was the toughest struggle they faced. Be client focused, pedal hard and efficiently, but don't lose sight of what 'balance' means to you!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

P. Goward, *A business of your own*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 2001.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Chicago Bulls service

Nurture loyalty among season ticket holders.

The Chicago Bulls Basketball team have 15,000 season ticket holders. At the peak of their success in the late 90's, they had 25,000 people on a waiting list wanting season tickets, and an unbelievable 500,000 people wanting tickets to any game.

You'd be forgiven for thinking that with this demand, there wouldn't be a huge focus on retaining existing clients. Keith Brown, VP of Sales at the Bulls;

"We have four full-time service representatives, whose sole job is to meet every single season ticket holder face-to-face at least once a year. They go to their place of business or home, knock on the door, walk in and say hello. They let them know we appreciate their support, ask if they have any questions or problems we might help with. Then they hand deliver a gift. This in addition to regular correspondence, promotions and a monthly newsletter."

3,750 clients per representative - do you have more clients to see than that?

Your dune challenge...

Get face-to-face with a season ticket holder today. A coffee, a courtesy call, an update on new offerings, a how-else-can-I-help enquiry. They've earned it - make the time.

The ocean glance...

The Bulls Jordan-era success came to an end. Brown - *"If we let them know they're appreciated, by being proactive in serving them, then if we become a team that wins only 1/2 its games and the guy is debating if he wants to renew his tickets, we hope those little things will push him our way."* Could that philosophy work for you?

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

Gilson, C. Pratt, M., Roberts, K, Weymes, E. *Peak Performance*, Profile Books, London, 2001.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Shared responsibility

"The answer to life, the Universe and everything?

42."

Douglas Adams, *The Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy*.

Magical number, hey? Here's some more.

10 working weeks left in '09.

54 working days to retain payers and recruit more helpee's.

191 Beach Run's published since January, sitting in your archive, on the website.

176 more to come before July '10 as part of your *Sales Cadence* subscription.

40 cents is your investment per Beach Run (if you paid full tote odds).

(That means the other **93** tools, papers, lists and interviews you get cost you **0**).

Only **1** way to get a mighty return on your investment in these messages.

I'll take responsibility for creating and delivering. Do my darndest to make them relevant & engaging. Try inspiring, cajoling and guilt-tripping you into action.

But I have to share some responsibility with you.

Your dune challenge...

Invest 10 minutes this week to flick through some past Beach Run's.

Find one that resonates and fits a sales situation you're facing.

Act on it.

The ocean glance...

If you can't find one that's relevant, that reminds you of a way to help a client and grow your sales? I'll take responsibility for being unable to help you, and you can ask for your money back.

Have a **MIGHTY WEEK 42!**

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

The Hallmark Value Star

"When you care enough to send the very best."

Hallmark slogan

The American greeting card giant builds emotional marketing plans around something it calls *The Hallmark Value Star*. The star's five points represent five things Hallmark believes clients consider before making a purchasing choice.

The 2 *rational* points;

- **Product** - Does it have the right features? Does it meet my needs?
- **Money** - Can I afford it? Is it value for money?

The 3 *emotional* points;

- **Energy** - Is it easy? Accessible? Will it save me time?
- **Experience** - Are the people nice? Is it pleasant to shop / buy / browse here? Do I feel valued?
- **Equity** - Do I trust this brand?

Hallmark believes all five prongs are equally weighted in a consumers mind.

Your dune challenge...

Run through the value star before walking into a client's premises today. Is your widget or service right for them? Can they afford it - will it save them / make them money? Logic aside, will they feel this can make their lives easier? Are you about to deliver an enjoyable experience? And based on your track record, do they trust your business (and you)?

Decide where you're falling short - how can you improve their perception?

The ocean glance...

Coffee mug quote - "*Life isn't measured by the breaths we take, but by the moments that take our breath away.*" Can you deliver your client a Hallmark moment this week - one they'll remember long after the purchasing decision and price is forgotten? That's the way to build word-of-mouth business!

Have a **MIGHTY WEEK 42!**

Emotional Marketing, cited in *Think for your customer* (J. & L. Stanley), Lizard, WA, 2004.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Magic Mike

"A la peanut butter sandwiches!"

The Amazing Mumford

My baby turned 6 last weekend, and we had the magnificent magician, Magic Mike, entertain the squealing masses.

With puffs of smoke, fart gags and out-of-thin-air rabbits, Magic Mike had the kids (big ones too) spellbound and laughing. Three audience hooking tricks he used;

- **Let the audience think they're clever** - Magic Mike showed a couple of tricks that the kids could figure out, then showed them how they could trick their friends.
- **Show them a whole new level of clever** - Just how did that wand elevate? A wow moment - the audience momentarily stopped thinking and just enjoyed it.
- **Let them hold the wand** - Mike let one of the kids tap the wand and make the rabbit appear - that story will get some mileage in the playground.

Can you be sales-magical?

Your dune challenge...

Show a client how to pull a rabbit from the hat - fix a problem, grasp an opportunity, prevent future mishaps, make the most of a situation. Then demonstrate a whole other magical level of service / performance / benefits that comes with partnering you.

Get a client hands-on - pull a lever, flick a switch, press a button that does the financial calculations and produces a "Ta da!" moment. Let them do the reveal.

The ocean glance...

I'm morbidly curious about how David Copperfield flies around the room, but I'm kinda happy in blissful ignorance (lets me enjoy the show & wonder if maybe it really is magic). Show a client behind curtain one, but keep the trick of trapdoor two to yourself - make the service appear magical!

Have a **MIGHTY WEEK 42!**

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

The other use

"Kick the can."

Solo's new ad campaign

Solo (thirst-quenching, light-on-fizz) has just built a new marketing campaign focusing on how to use the drink's waste packaging. Before recycling, crush the can and kick it around with your mates (after all, kids have been doing it for years). Forget the drink, it's the crushed can you want!

There's another use for your product or service - one it wasn't built or marketed for, but someone discovered it was good for.

Like the Hills Hoist that you could swing on (when you were a little smaller).

The porcelain-topped Grolsch bottle you now keep water in.

The Bicarb-of-Soda you put on carpet stains.

The real estate agent you bring in to get a current value on your home.

The grocery bags you use as bin liners.

The book you sit on the shelf (not to read, but to look learned).

The seminar you're attending, not for the content, but to see how the presenter does it.

The second use is there - ignore it or leverage it.

Your dune challenge...

What's a side-effect benefit of getting into a supplier-client relationship with you? Is it the training you offer? The way your customer service habits rub off on the clients team? The second bird that your one stone can kill to double-help this client?

Think hard. Ask clients - what do they *really* like about dealing with you? What was it a client said to their friend that got them picking up the phone to call you ("*I know you're a mortgage broker, but my mate said you're a guru in*")? Can you do anything with that information?

The ocean glance...

In pharmaceutical land, they call this 'non-indicated usage'. There might be great reasons you don't shout this side-effect-applying second use from the rooftops. But you should be aware of it. And if it can open client-helping sales conversations for you... isn't that positive?

Have a **MIGHTY WEEK 42!**

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Niche expertise

"Do what you do do well, boy..."

Ned Miller

In 1998, *Fortune* Magazine interviewed Warren Buffet and Bill Gates.

Their philosophies on money-making were polar - one all about change and innovation, the other about consistent performance and predictability.

The one thing they agreed on - stick to your strengths.

Gates - *"Be careful - if you're good at something, make sure you don't think that means you're automatically good at other things that you aren't."*

Buffett - *"I'm very suspect of the person who is very good at one business, who starts thinking they should tell the world how to behave on everything. Just because we made a lot of money doesn't mean we're better at giving advice on every subject - that's just crazy."*

Be the best Jack you can of one trade.

Your dune challenge...

If your sales CV had a line that said *"Industry-best at"*, could you fill it in? Could customers?

Review your greatest sales achievements - what one thing did you bring to each process that contributed to the outcome?

Can you sharpen it even more? Help a client benefit from it today? Spend time on it, rather than trying to be something you're not?

The ocean glance...

Gates and Buffett make mistakes, but they stick to their guns - their proven success habits - 'cause they know that with time and continuous application, they work. Try new things, take new paths, grab fresh opportunities, but don't abandon the skills or disciplines that got you the wins you've already chalked up!

Hope you've had a **MIGHTY WEEK 42!**

The Bill and Warren show, B Schendler, *Fortune*, July 1998.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Big Snapper

You shoulda seen the size of it...

I spent Saturday out on the Gulf of St Vincent on a charter boat searching for Snapper.

The boat's skipper and his deckhand looked after 10 paying guests beautifully, from giving lessons in rigging pilchard baits to bawdy anecdotes to actually finding some fish.

When someone caught a big fish, a crew member would gaff it, de-hook it and then show us how to hold it safely. They'd then get a photo of us, and before throwing it in the icebox, they would do something unique to each fish to identify it from the rest. Remove a pectoral fin, stick a hook in its mouth, take 3 barbs off its back. They'd say "*Now you know which fish is yours to take home - that beauty with the left fin missing*".

Customise your catch - a simple way of building feelings of proud ownership.

Your dune challenge...

Customise a client's purchase this week. Put a sticker on it, a plaque commemorating the purchase date. Write a thank-you message in the front cover of the instruction manual. Take a photo of the client hugging their new widget, frame it and hand it to them. Program their business name into the software so they see it each time they log on.

Something that, in months to come, they'll see and have a happy memory triggered - "*I remember when we bought this from Troy.*"

The ocean glance...

In summer, this boat crew take groups out 7 days a week. I asked them what they did in their spare time.

They said "*We go fishing*".

Transparent passion for what they do.... do clients see that in you?

Have a **MIGHTY** week!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Rituals

"Dearly beloved, we are gathered here today...."

In her leadership book *Tempered Radicals*, Education Professor Debra Meyerson discusses the importance of rituals in society and business. Graduation ceremonies, company picnics, bar exams, religious events, the Chairman's annual address to the team - moments designed to express and reinforce cultural values.

Meyer says there is a place for time-honored rituals, but there is also room for injecting a little of yourself into rituals - evolve them, shake things up, show what's important to *you*. Wearing your navy uniform to your wedding; taking home-made muffins in with the paperwork when you deliver a clients new purchase; inviting a VIP client to the company-only Christmas party.

Do you share your values with clients via rituals? Can you do something to shake up a stodgy one?

Your dune challenge...

Start a new ritual. *"Each time a client buys something from us, we'll make a song and dance by"* *"Each time a colleague makes a big sale, I'll make a point of"*. *"Each time a prospect says 'no thanks', I will"*.

Tweak a ritual that's become bog-standard. Your weekly around-the-grounds sales result discussions - put something new in. "Best sales story of the week where you were the customer". "Example of where a client actually described us using the words in our Mission Statement". "Someone who achieved six degrees of client separation via referrals". Don't kill the ritual - freshen it up, make it more powerful.

The ocean glance...

Consider private rituals for your own sales health. An hour by yourself with a coffee once a week, reviewing your business plan and why you're winning / losing business. A day each quarter walking the beach to think about what's truly important to you. Diarise them - self-rituals are hard to keep - but they're a mighty investment in your future!

Have a **MIGHTY** week!

Tempered Radicals, Debra Meyerson, Harvard Press, USA 2003.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Open all hours

"I'll be there for you... 'cause you're there for me too."

Theme song, *Friends*

I had a meeting with a client yesterday at a beautiful cafe / restaurant, recently voted "Best Breakfast in Australia".

The sort of place with casual tables on the footpath for a quick coffee, or white linen and leather service inside. The lady who runs the show is unfailingly friendly and remembers the names and standing orders of regulars, while treating new punters like guests in her home. The food and coffee is outstanding.

Here's the kicker though - when all the other fancy eateries are closed at breakfast, even lunch ("*we just do dinner*"), these guys are open. 7am - late. Every day.

You've got the premises. Clients need food and coffee every day. Open up. Make yourself available. Try being too exclusive, and clients become elusive.

Your dune challenge...

Get out and be where the clients are... every (work) day. None of this "*but Monday and Tuesday are my office days!*" If a competitor is in seeing the client while you're at your desk filling in forms, guess who's investing in the client relationship piggybank.

Book your critical admin tasks at times when clients are least likely to see you, but find a way to be toe-to-toe with a client every day.

The ocean glance...

The hostess of this eatery trod the line between 'friendly', 'familiar' and 'fawning' beautifully. Always smile, remember what the regulars like, be present, but not gushy-in-your-face. See if it can win you a client's "Best supplier in my life" award!

Have a **MIGHTY** week!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

The Patler Principle

Linking support to performance.

A Trend-ologist and voted as one of the '*Twenty most creative minds in America*', Louis Patler studies how successful organisations treat their people. He says there are four principles surrounding employer / employee relationships to be aware of;

1. **The Throwaway principle** - where businesses choose not to support the employees they see as having low personal competence.
2. **The Peter principle** - where businesses promote people to a level where they are no longer competent, then protect them with HR policies and laws.
3. **The Judas principle** - where highly competent employees are taken for granted and not sufficiently valued ('betrayed') by their company.
4. **The Patler principle** - where businesses recognise, support and celebrate those demonstrating their competencies.

Patler's point - successful organisations try to avoid principles 1, 2 & 3 (they are cancerous), and gear their energies to applying principle 4.

Your dune challenge...

Take out the words 'employee competence' and replace them with 'client spend'. Are you guilty of the throwaway principle - not supporting clients that invest much? Is there anything you can do to support them or incentivise some growth in their spend?

Do you apply the Peter principle - give too much support or are chained to a client that has no ability to spend more with you? Can you fix it? What about the Judas principle - ever take a big client's business for granted and let your support drop off?

Try spending more of your day applying the Patler principle - recognise and celebrate where a client is investing with you, and find ways to support and incentivise more purchasing.

The ocean glance...

So you think your company is guilty of 1, 2 and 3? Shoulder some responsibility - are you demonstrating *your* competencies fully? Rewarding your boss / colleague / HR director with a pat on the back / congratulatory email when they do something right? The Patler principle can be applied by anyone, not just the boss!

Have a **MIGHTY** week!

Trendsmart, L Patler, Sourcebooks, USA, 2003.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Wisdom in questions

Why are you reading this?

Voltaire said *"Judge a person by their questions, not their answers."*

Gandhi said *"If you don't ask, you don't get."*

Einstein said *"The important thing is to never stop questioning."*

Prof. Julius Sumner-Miller said *"Why is it so?"*

Billy Connolly said *"Wisdom is in the constant questioning of where you are."*

Mr Garrison from *South Park* said *"There's no such thing as stupid questions, only stupid people."*

For our 200th Beach Run, I thought I'd share the single biggest reason for long-term sales success I've seen in clients and sales professionals I've studied.

It's not been their ability to deliver slick presentations. It's not been through discounting. It's not even from having better widgets than the next guys.

They ask the right questions. Of themselves and clients. Constantly.

Your dune challenge...

Plan a minimum of one great question you'll ask each client today. Don't wing it - think about what you need to know to help them.

What are they aiming to achieve? What's wrong with their current situation? How is it impacting you? What happens if they do nothing? What application are they going to use if for? How often / when / why / what / who / how ..? Can we set up a trial? Would they like it in green, or red? How would you like to pay?

Is there any reason you can't try a variation of these questions today?

The ocean glance...

Ask yourself one great question today - are the things you're about to do going to get you a step closer to your personal goals? Err, do you have goals? If the tasks *aren't* helping you achieve your goals, why are you doing them? What could you do to fix it?

(OK, that was 4 questions... but the first is the most critical - ask it of yourself!)

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Teacher shoulders

The system isn't perfect... that's why we hired you.

I heard Education Professor Alan Reid speak last week about the Rudd Government's "Education Revolution".

For those without rug rats incurring school fees, the crux - to replace the current state-controlled school system, the Federal Government will slowly roll out a standardised approach to teaching subjects, starting with maths and science, in all Australian schools.

When a teacher in this room asked *"that sounds fine once everything is implemented and humming along, but what about those kids caught in the change-over period? How will the system work for them?"*, Professor Reid said *"It will need what has always been needed - the competence and professionalism of individual teachers to meld the two systems together for a period to deliver the best for their kids."*

System flaws and policy changes to be nursed through at the client coalface by broad-shouldered professionals.

Your dune challenge...

Are there policies, processes or gaping chasms in your business that make it tough for your clients? Products that are tricky to install, administrative hurdles to jump when they set up an account, routine delivery delays, a game of phone tag that gets played whenever they want to speak to someone?

Be the buffer. Get close to the client and nurse them through. Communicate constantly, tailor something special for them, be the squeaky wheel in your business to get it fixed. The customer - and your business - rely on you for it.

The ocean glance...

I've borrowed the wisdom of professional educators in several *BR*'s now. Because I believe that's a big part of a sales professional's role - educating clients about choices, fixes, better ways, and that there really is someone willing and available to help. If you've earned the right, educate a client about the benefits of partnering you!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Good luck

"Say Hi to your Mum for me!"

Rove McManus' signature sign-off

Simple exchange in front of me at the Newsagent's on Saturday.

50-ish man asks for a Cross-Lotto ticket.

20-ish guy behind the counter takes his money and hands him a ticket.

The young bloke said "*Here you go*".

The purchaser said "*Thanks, mate*" and started to walk out.

Then the guy behind the counter said something that made me blink.

He said "*Good luck, sir!*"

Then turned his attention to me.

"*Good luck*" mightn't always be remarkable, but I'd never heard it in this situation.

Now I remember this newsagent, and I bet the other bloke will too.

Your dune challenge...

What's your happy, positive, stick-in-client-memory conversation finale? "*Thank you for letting me help you!*"? "*See you next week!*". "*I hope you love your purchase!*". "*Anytime, if I can help, please - pick up the phone!*"

Yeah, I use "*Cheers*" a lot too. I think it's friendly. But it's also bland and invisible. Decide to stand out today.

The ocean glance...

If a guy selling Lotto tickets, just like 42,000 other agents, can use three words to stand out and make a client feel positive, confident, expectant and (with the "*Sir*"), important.... can you?

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day! (from the only person I'm betting says that to you)

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Smash the stereotype

"We're adding a little something to this month's sales contest.

First prize is a Cadillac Eldorado. Second prize is a set of steak knives.

Third prize is 'you're fired'."

Alec Baldwin, *Glengarry Glen Ross*

For those in the enviable and hard-won position of being in front of your '09 sales number, there's a couple of run-to-Christmas strategies you might be considering.

First, pull out all stops. Fat commissions and a name on the President's Cup are up for grabs. Start turning over new sales rocks like there's no tomorrow. Leverage the life out of existing clients business. Offer amazing prices for quick wins, or inflate your rate for record profit margins.

Second - sandbag. You've done what was asked of you. Next year's numbers will be 20% higher. You can sneak a client's big order into 2010 and get a head start come January. They'll be fine until then, you'll nurse them through.

Is either approach in the client's best interest? What will be the longer-term tradeoff for your Red Bull-ish sales blitz? Whose interest are you acting in by deliberately stalling?

Your dune challenge...

Consider door number 3 - the simple, consistent, sleep-straight-in-bed approach. Continue delivering the same high level of service to clients who already paid for it. Keep looking for and showing them new ways you can help, and if they want and need it now, deliver and invoice it now. If you're truly valuable to the client, there'll be more where that came from.

Find someone new to help today. Why not two? Bite size new B.D. approaches that don't compromise your delivery to those already paying (who are your best source of new business). Enough prospecting to keep the people-I'll-help hopper manageably full.

The ocean glance...

If you're *not* ahead of plan yet (42 working days to Xmas), there's three choices. Pray for those big quotes to come in. Throw your arms in the air, say you gave it your best and start planning for 2010. Or ask of yourself "*What do I have to do differently today to help those with means, motive and opportunity achieve a pleasure or fix a pain with my stuff as quickly as possible?*" If you don't know... ask for help!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Moderation

"The stones belong to the island.
If you take something from the island,
you must give something back in return."

Wise old Balthazar in *Milo and the magical stones*

Recently, I set myself a Sales Broccoli challenge ("*don't say you don't like it 'til you try it*") to test-drive Twitter.

Three observations;

1. Like any communication medium, it's easily abused - incessant product flogs, inane look-at-me tweets, a soapbox for airing grievances and agendas, people following you'll so you'll autofollow them back. Those uses stink.
2. If all you ever do is re-tweet other peoples stuff and post links ("*Hey, look what I found on the net!*"), you're hard to love. We don't even know if you're real.
3. The tweeters I've enjoyed most (and have an impressive following) seem to have a good mix. Sharing useful information and some of their expertise, asking questions of others, praising, offering a glimpse of their humour and human side, and not overdoing it in any one area.

They are moderate and diverse in what they give and take.

Your dune challenge...

Give a little to a client or prospect today. Some time, an ear, a shoulder, a useful report, a contact, a lead, an answer to a question they might otherwise pay a consultant for.

Then, ask for a little. The chance to help, an order, a referral, a testimonial, permission to call back next Tuesday, for five minutes.

Be moderate, mix up the giving and taking and avoid excess in any one area.

The ocean glance...

I've decided that, as a one man band, the opportunity cost that comes with Twitter is too much for me to pay right now. There are other things I've prioritised, so I'm practicing 'selective ignorance' and stopped tweeting. New Broccoli challenge - get the best ROI from this extra tweet-free time!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Good life service

Do you get the serve bit in service?

This from the window of a Pizza Bar.

Never mind expectations instilled in new employees.

What do walk-by's imagine about the experience they'd have here?

Your dune challenge...



Put those three words into your sales effort planning today. Care. Service. Passion. Who'll get it from you? How? How will they see it? How will it help them?

While you're at it, 'compliment' someone. You like it done to you, yes?

The ocean glance...

Who else hangs their want ads on a clipboard in texta in the shop window? So simple, free, and a point of differentiation that's adding to the feel of the place.

If a pizza bar can be quirky and individual, can you?

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

For the curious, Goodlife in Hutt St Adelaide... and the pizza shows the passion.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

You built the barrier

Don't trip over your sales shoelaces.

Communications consultant John Barker says there are lots of reasons prospective clients raise barriers when faced with purchasing. Fear, lack of a connection with the salesperson, to deliberately test you. But one of the biggest barrier builders?

You.

Through...

- answering a prospect's questions too generically (they can't see how your solution fits in their world)
- swamping them with data (rather than narrowing down with good questions)
- asking irrelevant questions (that show you don't understand key issues)
- stereotyping your sales approach ("*But I'm an individual!*")
- pushing too fast (instead of taking time to connect with & understand them)
- not being ready to negotiate (sticking to a one-size-fits-all mindset)

There are enough barriers to getting a 'yes' without building your own.

Your dune challenge...

Watch your feet. Get ready to ask a well-thought-out question of a client today, rather than polish your canned pitch. Don't over-reach - set realistic call goals (like "build rapport, understand need, pique interest and earn the right to come back next week").

If the client surprises you today and says "*Drop the price by 10% and I'll sign right now...*", are you ready to negotiate? Be clear where you can go, where the line is, and how you can justify it.

The ocean glance...

To choose how to deal with purchasing barriers, you have to first recognise them. Are they real? The last roll of the dice to test you? Masking hidden objections? If you don't know, ask. "*May I ask, what is the reason / why do you say that?*" Sort the real from the Red Herrings - and make sure it wasn't your own doing!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

Next Step Selling, J Barker, Pearson Education, NSW, 2001.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

While the ponies gallop

Others play....

Today, Melbourne Cup, there'll be merriment and parties and clients taking some downtime.

But some won't.

There'll be sales teams entertaining customers, wearing fascinators, having office sweeps and cracking open bubbles for an early finish.

But some won't.

"It's one day a year! We've earned a hair let-down! It's un-Australian to work this afternoon!"

Some will.

Your dune challenge...

If you're choosing to down tools at lunch to scream at the tele, nibble on jatz or enjoy a little blush, make it guilt-free by ramping up your client recruitment & retention efforts this morning. Do one extra (call, proposal, appointment, follow-up, piece of client-focused research).

If you don't care who wins, don't pay a wasted-opportunity cost. Use this competitor-thin time to help a loyal customer, or find a prospect who'll benefit from becoming a customer. Not everyone will be watching the box. Instead of yelling "Go, you good thing" for a horse, yell it for a customer.

The ocean glance...

7:30am and 6:15pm any weekday. Anytime after 4pm Friday. Melbourne Cup times. Times your competitors won't call customers. Times a client's receptionist isn't in the office, and bosses themselves answer the phone. A time to lead the field as someone serious about their profession. Call when no-one else can be bothered - get your sales nose in front!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Anticipation

Only 42 sleeps....



Adelaide is getting two Pandas. Atop the Electricity Trust building, there's a clock counting down the days. Unless you run on batteries, Panda's are more exciting than electricity. But every time you look up at Wang Wang, you see ETSA.

If your product isn't sexy or interest-grabbing, can you associate yourself with something or someone that is? Can you build a sense of anticipation, of excitement, for something you're preparing to deliver to a client?

Your dune challenge...

Forget Panda's - what's more interesting or topical than your widget or service? An education seminar you've got coming up? A rewards program you run for purchasers? Special price week? A new strategic partner? A cool new reference site?

Make sure a client can see it. Remind them that tomorrow, they'll be one sleep closer to benefiting themselves. Teasers, e-reminders, notes, phone-calls to confirm appointments. Show them the moving clock, stay front of mind.

The ocean glance...

You won't buy more electricity just because these guys power Panda's. But you might give their panda-branded literature five extra seconds attention. They've fertilised - you'll be more receptive to future communications. Good corporate citizenship aside, it demonstrates longer-term thinking. Are you thinking long term in *your* business?

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Doosh doosh

"30% of people will leave a shop earlier than intended
if the background music annoys them."

Julian Treasure, sound expert

Julian Treasure runs *Sound Agency* - advisers to businesses on how to use sound effectively. He spoke at a recent TED conference (www.ted.com).

Treasure says there are four ways sound affects us;

1. **Physiological** - banging or grating noises trigger 'fight or flight' Cortisol responses; rhythmic ocean waves synch with our bodies and relax us.
2. **Psychological** - music affects us emotionally; the sound of birdsong is reassuring (when birds sing, we instinctively know our environment is safe).
3. **Cognitively** - when there's lots of voices overlapping and yelling at us, our narrow bandwidth brains can't process things properly. Studies show we're 1/3 as productive in open-plan offices compared to working in quiet rooms.
4. **Behavioural** - turn the doosh doosh music up in your car and you're more likely to drive like a hoon. Richard Clayderman, you'll slow down.

Treasure's point - be conscious of the noises around you and that you emit, because they're impacting how you perform and how others perceive you.

Your dune challenge...

The coffee shop you're meeting a client in - is it too raucous to fully capture their attention? The radio your warehouse team have blaring in the background - is it conducive to rapport-building sales conversations? The "*I can't take your call right now*" message on your phone - is it recorded with background traffic and in a rushed tone, or in a quiet room with a relaxed, soothing timbre in your voice?

The ocean glance...

Treasure says music is the most powerful sound we have (sing the "Duh-DUH!" music from *Jaws* for 1 second... what do you think of?) Two reasons - you can recognise music very quickly, and we associate it strongly.

When your client hear the words "*Hey, I've got Troy on the phone for you!*", do they recognise quickly and associate strongly? Try build on that today!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Recalling consoles

"Create something that no-one can match for one year.

Make it so much better, there'll be no question of which one customers will want."

Hiroshi Yamauchi

21-year-old Hiroshi Yamauchi took over his Grandfather's playing card manufacturing business in 1949. Seeing a bleak future for the product, Hiroshi expanded into instant rice products, a 'love hotel' and taxis. After umpteen false starts and facing ruin, Hiroshi realised his greatest strength was the loyalty of the customer group for their playing cards - toy stores. Engineers were hired, innovations developed, and loyal customers satisfied.

The company - Nintendo. Hiroshi - Japan's richest man.

6 months after launching their first gaming console (complete with *Donkey Kong*), they realised there was a problem with the circuitry that caused some machines to freeze. They could have let it slide - competitors were catching up and Christmas sales were starting. But Hiroshi ordered a total product recall. *"If we let the problem fester, it will damage Nintendo's reputation among consumers."*

Your dune challenge...

About to sell something to a customer that you know isn't quite right? That might cause problems because the fit or the application they're planning to use it for is wrong?

Tell 'em. Offer an alternative if you can. *"I'd love to help you with this product or service, but in your best interest, my advice would be..."*. At least make them aware. If you know it's likely to fail, you stink as a supply partner if you don't have the courage to discuss it.

The ocean glance...

Donkey Kong was supposed to be called *Monkey Kong*, but it got mistranslated to English! The Nintendo sales team hated the name and thought it would never sell. Hiroshi backed the vision of his chief creative to the hilt, and a star was born. Share your vision, back your judgment, and ignore the naysayers. Super, Mario!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

How they started global brands, David Lester, Crimson, UK, 2008.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Friend filters

To produce 12 grams of dried saffron,
you need 1 kg of saffron flowers.

Wikipedia

To generate your circle of friends, you've gone through a lengthy vetting process.

You've exposed yourself to thousands of people in all kinds of situations, where you ran them through superficial friend filter number one - do they look & sound like they're worth investing time and effort with?

The cohort that gets through hits filter two - do you like them? Do you have anything in common? Are you motivated to extend the conversation?

The shrinking group hits filter three - do I want to get to know this person better, and let them get to know me? Do I sense this has a future?

The chain of filters gets progressively finer.

But if you're not feeding enough into filter number one, your output will always be lower than those exposing themselves to more potential friend pools.

Your dune challenge...

So you want to recruit 5 new clients before Christmas? How many proposals will you have to submit to get 5 through? How many second meetings will you have to have with prospects to earn the right to submit those proposals? How many first meetings to generate the second meetings? How many appointment requests to get that number of first meetings? How many networking forums / internet searches / referral requests to get the target list of names to ask for first meetings?

Commit to the biggest number and the small one will come.

The ocean glance...

If the professional situations you expose yourself to are all the same (industry forums, traditional networking haunts, existing client meetings), then the people you'll throw at filter one will also be similar. If that's working for you, congratulations! If it's not, remember that filters are deliberately selective, so be diverse in what you run through them - go find a new source of potential business friends this week!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Think for me

"It was the best of sales efforts, it was the worst of sales efforts."

If Dickens was a sales critic

Two shopping experiences yesterday. The first to pick up some new glasses. Didn't start well - I approached the counter, the sales lady looked at me like I'd stepped in something and said "Yes?". You see where this is heading... long story short, we fumbled through the transaction, but there was a computer hiccup in me claiming the health fund rebate. She said "*I'm not sure what's happening here...*", then looked at me blankly. With a dumbfounded return look, she eventually got my unspoken message of "*I don't know, you work here!*"

Later, I went into a newsagency and took several packets of cellophane off the shelf to wrap some gifts. The smiling guy behind the counter said "*I'm not sure if it helps, but we sell this in bigger roles - it looks like you have a bit of stuff to wrap?*"

Hallelujah. Someone to think for me.

Your dune challenge...

Do some thinking for a client today. One, they need it (they don't know as much as you about your great stuff or its applications). Two, they're paying for it. Three, it's rare and remarkable and it feels good.

It just needs you to consider this simple idea - "*I wonder if there's a better way I can help them...*".

The ocean glance...

For hardy *Beach Runners*, you might recall me singing the praises of an Optometrist's store. Yep, same one. The credit you earn doesn't last forever. Particularly if you don't see your clients frequently, you're harshly judged on your last customer interaction. Make it a good one, or do good things for them a lot more frequently to offset the odd negative!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Because I'll forget

"While the spoken word can travel faster, you can't take it home in your hand.
Only the written word can be absorbed wholly at the convenience of the reader."

Kingman Brewster

I ran a workshop yesterday with 11 guest speakers and 50 delegates from sales and sales management roles.

It was a ripper day (hot), and the wisdom from guest presentations will fuel a few *Beach Run's*. But perhaps the masterstroke (if I do say so myself) was to engage the services of a professional writer for the day.

Throughout proceedings, while I introduced people and took care of logistics, the very talented Rob scribbled and typed furiously to capture the presenters words.

As a bit of a control freak, I found delegating the capture of key speaker points to another surprisingly liberating. I've seen Rob's great output before, I can't do it all myself, and his dedicated scribe work (while I worried about keeping customers happy) means we'll generate a transcript that nails it.

I would have missed half the content because I was preoccupied.

Your dune challenge...

Write it down. You won't remember it. The client meeting, the training course you're attending, the action points to come from the staff huddle, the questions you need to ask Prospect A, the great idea you had driving to work this morning about how you could help Big Client B... write it down.

No-one's that clever they'll remember it all.

The ocean glance...

I spent a pretty penny on professional catering (and it was nice), but knowing it was going to be a scorcher, I also went to the supermarket and bought two \$3 boxes of Icy Poles for afternoon tea. Guess what got the most positive comments. Think about how you can bring a smile to your clients dial by being a little different, a little considerate, a little quirky today... stand out!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Footprints at the threshold

"We love our habits more than our income, often more than our life."

Bertrand Russell

Steve Cone is Global MD of Citigroup Global Wealth Management and responsible for managing the brand of a business that serves 200 million customers.

In his book *Steal these ideas!*, Cone says 30 years in the finance industry has taught him an important lesson - "*People renew the way they are acquired.*" That is, customers will choose to purchase with you a second time using the same thought patterns they used when choosing you the first time. If a heavy discount got them buying, then that'll be a big driver behind their repeat business. If they liked your training and after-sales support options for purchase one, chances are similar things will influence purchase two.

Cone contends our purchasing drivers are habitual.

Do you know why your clients came on board the first time, and what you're going to need to do to get them buying again?

Your dune challenge...

Consider a client you'd like repeat business from. Why did they choose you last time? You walked them slowly and stepwise through the benefits of a supply marriage? You said you'd undercut the best offer from competitors? You had a coffee and just hit it off? You gave them a taste of VIP service even before they got out their Visa? (Don't know? Ask them.)

You're going to have to go there again. Only better. Further this time. You've set the purchasing experience benchmark. Find a way to exceed it.

The ocean glance...

Cone's observation on negative responses from prospects - "*When you communicate with large numbers of people (which you need to do to grow your business), you'll always get some negative feedback from a small percentage of people. Deal with it.*" No no's means not enough activity!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

Steal these ideas!, S Cone, Bloomberg, NY, 2005.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Three reasons to train

"I hated every minute of training. But I said to myself "*Don't quit.*"

Suffer now and live the rest of your life as a champion."

Muhammad Ali

Philip Kotler and John Caslione are experts in business and marketing strategy. Their new book *Chaotics* describes the traps many businesses fall into during uncertain times.

One fatal response they suggest businesses have during market turbulence is to cut back on training and development for both staff and customers. The obvious flaw - by not up- or re-skilling staff, you decrease their effectiveness to deliver (or sell) to an already shaky customer group, and it hits the businesses bottom line. And by not educating your customers, you reduce their ability to get the most from your solutions, thereby decreasing satisfaction levels. But two other downsides are identified;

- Training gives you the chance to expose weaknesses, flaws or other opportunities for improvement you weren't even aware of.
- You will lose talented people (or customers) to those willing to help them grow & develop.

Your dune challenge...

For your customers, invest time and energy building or delivering a training initiative. Something you have expertise in that they might value. Create a seminar, a laminated cheat sheet, run through the operator guide one-on-one with them over a coffee. In the process, see if you can uncover other ways you might help them.

For you - don't wait for the company to pony up. Grab the training manual or a learned colleague or a piece of demo equipment, and run your own training lab. Do it with a mate and test each other. See where else your knowledge could be boosted, and book time to take your training to the next level.

The ocean glance...

The authors cite Professor Richard Blandy from Adelaide, whose *National Training Evaluation* studied the commercial benefits realised by businesses that focus on training. Blandy's conclusion - "*significant increases in bottom lines occur when profitable training opportunities are pursued... and the opportunities often already exist within most enterprises*". My sales trainer vested interests aside, there's something available in your business right now than could help you upskill yourself... go grasp it!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

Chaotics, Kotler & Caslione, Amacom, NY, 2009.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

The Master

"You can always become better."

Tiger Woods

When you think you're too good to practice...

When you think role-playing is a waste of time...

When you believe that make-believe is for kids...

Tiger Woods, accepting yesterday's Gold Jacket at Kingston Heath, said *"I didn't play very well yesterday. So I went back last night, ran through some rehearsals, and it started feeling pretty comfortable, and so I started the day well today..."*.

Your dune challenge...

A question you'll ask. A greeting you'll offer. How you'll explain the graph on page three of the brochure. Demonstrating the mechanism on your whirring thing. How you'll ideally end the conversation.

Rehearse it before you go in.

The ocean glance...

The TV golf commentators said Tiger hits bad shots like everyone. Then he curses and occasionally throws a club. But his Dad taught him he has only ten seconds to be angry and vent. Then, back into positive, forward looking, confident mode. Mental strength required to forgive yourself and refocus... can you do it this week?

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Define the rules

"Set exorbitant standards and give your people hell when they don't live up to them.

There's nothing so demoralizing as a boss who tolerates second-rate work."

David Ogilvy, Ad guru

This is my second go at this morning's *Beach Run*. Between meetings yesterday, I cobbled together a piece of trite citing a book I'd only skim-read and tried to draw a parallel between effective team behaviours and closing sales.

It was rubbish.

It nearly got through though. In a reflective moment last night, it struck me that, long after you've skimmed the message and filed it in the Troy-file (you've got one, admit it), this guff would carry my name forever more. When these e-prods are eventually compiled as a *War & Peace* epic that becomes compulsory reading for every aspiring sales professional on the planet (let me dream), they'll judge me on that thing I compromised my standards on.

So... take two. I hope it's better. I'm happier to stand behind it.

Your dune challenge...

Do a standards check today. The report you're about to send to the client. The email you're about to hit enter on. The preparation you've done prior to your next prospect meeting.

Have you lived up to the high standards you hold yourself to?

The ocean glance...

Standard = expected. Are your standards better than industry-standard? Do your clients say "*Oh, I suppose the help I get from them is pretty standard.*" Push the industry standard up a bit today - what can you do that sets the new high standard?

(And my apologies for nearly sending you work I consider below par... refocusing to bring you a better standard! :-)

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Ubuntu

"We have learned over many years that generosity, compassion, gentleness and caring are so much more powerful than their counterparts."

Archbishop Desmond Tutu

Have you heard the term *Ubuntu* before?

It describes an ancient South African form of community where cooperation is a driving force. It means living in harmony with others; that to look after another's welfare is to look after your own. It is captured in the Zulu expression *Umuntu ngumuntu nangabantu* ("a person is a person through other persons").

The five key values of Ubuntu are *survival, compassion, solidarity, dignity and respect*.

Has Ubuntu got a place in your professional endeavors today?

Your dune challenge...

What can you do to help a client or partner's business survive today?

Who will you demonstrate some understanding and compassion to?

How will you show a colleague or your boss you are standing beside them, committed to helping them achieve their goals?

When you see a colleague, client, prospect or competitor slip up, will you help them save face and preserve dignity?

Will you take one of 1,000 opportunities you'll have to demonstrate respect today?

The ocean glance...

With 27 working days to Christmas, it'll be easy to lose sight of cooperative efforts in the chase to hit your year-end target. For that very reason, because so many others won't, you can stand out by lending a hand. Think longer term, try and be a person through other persons.

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

Written about in *The character of leadership*, J Sarros e al, Wiley, Qld, 2006.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Things are moving fast

"What I'm trying to stress is that things are happening pretty quickly now."

Peter Owen, *The Wilderness Society*

The importance of forward planning slapped me twice this week.

I got to hear Peter Owen from *The Wilderness Society* cite a jaw-dropping statistic. The population of our planet is growing at approximately 220,000 people per day. Per day. That's a whole Australia every 3 months. Desperately trying to raise awareness of ecological disasters on our doorstep, he said *"Be aware. Get active. Write. Lobby. Only fund ethical businesses that are demonstrating good corporate citizen behaviours. It's your actions now, your planning, that will determine what's left for your kids."*

The mercury on the west coast of SA is set to hit 47 degrees today, and the CFS is issuing its second-ever "Catastrophic Bushfire Warning". The advice - if you're super-ready and you're absolutely sure it's appropriate, bunker in to guard your property early. If you haven't got a bushfire plan by now, too late. Safest option - get your butt out quickly and early.

Your planning now is your best shot at positively impacting your future.

Your dune challenge...

Have you got an activity plan for the remaining 26 working days of '09? Have you considered how you'll help clients, invest time, grow business, prevent sales disasters in 2010?

Things will happen fast - invest a little time today and hold (or at very least book) even a short planning session.

The ocean glance...

Air conditioner sales go crazy about now. Backyard shade sails. Swimming pools. We knew summer was coming. Why wait 'til we're already sweating and there's a backlog of orders? You know the importance of writing a thank-you note. Of taking the initiative to call a new prospect. Of building a simple value-add for loyal existing clients. Don't let 'busy' get in the way of smart, forward planning - things move too fast!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day! Thank you to my gracious hosts, the FSU, for letting me hear Peter speak!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Time off for good behaviour

"And now for something completely different..."

Monty Python

If I didn't come up with a *Beach Run* today, if I gave you some respite from the anecdotes, nags, odd parallels and it-happened-to-me's...

...what would you write here?

What's the greatest sales lesson *you've* ever learnt?

The principle you'd stand on a soap-box and shout out, "*This is the secret!*"?

Shout it to yourself right now. Remind yourself of one piece of hard-won sales wisdom this morning.

If you're really brave, shout it to me. Wrap it up in a story. I'd like to hear it, and I bet other *Beach Runners* would too!

Your dune challenge...

Give yourself one. Happy self-directed learning day.

The ocean glance...

I don't want to shirk my responsibility as an inbox sales mosquito. But if this prompts you to consciously remember (and then act on) the best piece of sales advice you ever received.... More than that, if it prompts just *one* of the hundreds of *Beach Runners* to email their best lesson in, and we can share it, well....

Who's brave enough?

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

I don't like it

"A little dog with a BIG dog personality."

RedBalloon Value

Naomi Simson is the founder of RedBalloon, a business that sells experiences. A former Telstra Australian Business Woman award winner, Simson helps organisations recognise and reward their staff, customers and supporters through gifts like hot air balloon rides, hot laps in race cars and cooking classes.

To keep her own growing team of staff engaged, Simson says *"It's better to know what people love and loathe. If I can take away something that a staff member loathes, they'll be more engaged and love what they do."*

We spend a lot of time trying to do things that make clients happy. What are you doing to remove something that makes them unhappy?

Your dune challenge...

Do you know annoys your customers? Your best customer - what's the biggest frustration they have today? Think more broadly than what your business might do that irritates (although that's a good starting point) - what's making them unhappy?

Don't know? Ask.

Can you help them? Know someone that can? Let them vent - even if the problem can't be easily fixed, will giving them a sympathetic ear make them feel a little happier?

The ocean glance...

The article I've quoted Naomi from also cited Melissa Dunn Lampe from the Gallup organisation. Dunn Lampe says one of the main reasons employees disengage from their business is a perceived lack of recognition for their efforts. Dunn Lampe says before you get too sooky la la about not getting a pat on the back, *"my question to you is, when was the last time you went out of your way to give someone else some recognition?"*

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

Engaged to the job, P Nicholas, The Australian, November 21 - 22 2009.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Nice tie

"The greatest compliment that was ever paid me
was when one asked me what I thought, then tended to my answer."

Henry David Thoreau

Buying some Freddo Frogs for a workshop last week, I lined up at the Coles checkout behind an elderly man.

The 50-ish lady scanning his bread said to him *"That's a lovely shirt sir, I really like the colour!"* (Purple - it was pretty groovy for an 80-year-old). He smiled, muttered something and trotted off.

She then smiled at me and said *"Sir, I promise I don't do this to every man that comes through here, but I really like your tie!"*. I thanked her, made a joke, then left with my choccies, chest out, swagger in step, smile on my dial, feeling a little better than when I'd walked in the shop.

Doesn't take much to make someone's day.

Your dune challenge...

Before you pull out your very clever double-blind clinical trial, competitive analysis chart or 80-page tender response document, pump someone's tyres up.

Give a genuine compliment. Don't blow smoke for the sake of it, but if the client has just finished a fancy reno of their showroom that you think they're proud of, or you love what they've done with their garden, or you really *do* like their tie, tell them.

The ocean glance...

You can reinforce a culture of compliment-giving by being a grateful recipient when one sails your way. Smile, look them in the eye, thank the person for their compliment, let them know they've done a nice thing that you appreciate. Compliments are free fertiliser that increase the chance of relationship growth. (But like fertiliser, if it's not genuine, it will stink!)

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Cultural inspiration

"There's a lot of active wear inspired by yoga.

Everyone may not necessarily be doing yoga, but they want to look ready for it."

Michael Perman, Levi Strauss

Michael Perman is Senior Director of Consumer Insights at Levi Strauss & Co, the jeans company.

Perman says that in 2003, one of the cultural inspirations Levi's tapped into was peoples desire to appear 'ready for anything'. The Iraq war was on, corporations were falling over, Martha Stewart went to jail, and there was a wave of consumer sentiment saying "*we can't trust anyone, we're on our own, and we need to feel prepared*" (right around the same time, global Hummer and SUV sales went nuts).

Levi took this inspiration to develop 'multi-purpose work wear' (think cargo pants, lots of pockets, wear anywhere anytime). Perman - "*we created apparel that let customers give the impression they were ready to provide some sort of service to the world.*"

Your dune challenge...

Are you spending a part of your day educating, inspiring, equipping your best clients or prospects to provide 'a service to the world'? Giving them the tools, information and support they need to make better decisions, help others, feel in control and competent?

Sells a lot of jeans.

The ocean glance...

Perman - "*To feel in control, people need to feel they are 'creating', not just 'consuming'.*" No-one wants to feel like they're buying pre-packaged, exactly-the-same-as-everyone-else stuff - it's uninspiring and impersonal. How will you helping your client co-create a solution using *your* services and help today?

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

Spark - be more innovative through co-creation, John Winsor, Dearborn, USA, 2006.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Safe hospitality

Safe-tea.

I was lucky enough to attend a trade-show breakfast that a safety equipment sales client put on yesterday.

As a way of exposing their products, services and generous hospitality to clients they might otherwise only see on construction sites or in factories, they erect a giant marquee in front of their premises two mornings each year. They have supplier companies bring in their latest and greatest technology and they give them guest presentation spots. They get a caterer with coffee and a BBQ to nourish the 7:30am crowd. They invite all types of clients, from CEO's to end-users of safety equipment, to see the range, have a snag, hear an educational talk and take home a showbag with the latest catalogue (and a flash pair of gloves).

Suppliers are keen to be involved. Clients are coming back over and over. Their business neighbours have jumped on board to make the show even bigger. They're even taking the initiative to regional areas as a show of support for remote clients. And it more than pays for itself.

All it takes is the desire to stand out and a little effort to pull it together.

Your dune challenge...

There's a bold new initiative just waiting to be run in your industry. It might've been tried years ago, but slipped off the priority list. It might be commonplace in other industries, but just never had anyone brave enough to modify it for yours. It's highly customer-focused, potentially very profitable, a lot of fun to plan and execute, and no-one else is doing it.

Do you know what it is? Why not try it?

The ocean glance...

The crowd photos taken on the morning and the follow-ups that will be generated from this morning will keep the sales team busy for some time. If you've ever sooked about not having enough leads or no good reasons to call on your clients... build one!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Avagoyamug

"But if you try sometimes... you might find..."

Mick Jagger

Richard Branson has built an empire doing it.
Peter Costello will be judged harshly because he wouldn't.
80% of small businesses go under within 2-5 years when they try it.
Your kids have no qualms about it when programming the DVD recorder.
Evel Knievel and Eddie the Eagle make you smile 'cause they did.
It sucks when you fall agonisingly short when it's done.
Nothing ever got achieved when you didn't.
Occasionally, amazing things happened when you did.
Do you want the hollow feeling that comes when you choose not to?
Avagoyamug.

Your dune challenge...

The call you've been putting off. The discipline you've seen the best implement (but you've delayed trying). The conversation with the boss to ask for something you're not sure they'll grant. The newsletter you've held off sending out that just might not be perfect (maybe one more proof read?). The prospect that just might, just might have a need for what you could show them.

A.A.G.Y.M. Today.

The ocean glance...

Any decent process - including a proven-successful sales process - allows for negative results. You won't get it right every time. Ups come with downs. The more things you try, the more ballz-ups you'll make. But the process allows for it - don't think you've broken it. You're one step closer to a positive outcome (and chalked up a mighty learning on the way).
Ava.....

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

(and you're not really a mug - I mean that affectionately!)

Manners

P's and Q's.

A Monday morning etiquette refresher...

We've all been introduced to a stranger by a mutual acquaintance. America's leading modern etiquette expert Peggy Post (grand-daughter of Emily) says there are five common introduction blunders you can make;

- **Look away when someone is being introduced to you** - just rude, really.
- **Make overly personal comments** - "*Britney, this is Justin. He got retrenched last week...*", makes people a tad uncomfortable.
- **Interrupting** - don't break the flow of an existing conversation by butting in mid-sentence to make an introduction. Wait for a conversational pause.
- **Leaving someone out of post-introduction conversation** - "*Nice to meet you, Troy . (Turning away) So Pierre, where were we? Oh, yes, ...*". Or vice versa, don't ignore the person that introduced you.
- **Gushing** - "*Ravi, you've got to meet this lady, she's by far the greatest sales professional our company has ever hired...*" - it embarrasses people.

Your dune challenge...

The next chance you have to connect two people, take some of Ms Post's advice. Eye contact, kind but conservative opening comments, engaging all parties in discussion, and waiting until people finish talking.

I know your Nanna taught you this, but it's frightening how often it's ignored!

The ocean glance...

Posts' book also discusses the importance of hand-written pen & paper thank-you notes. Interestingly, I was at a workshop a couple of weeks ago, where a guest speaker discussed how remarkable audience members could make themselves look were they to write a hand-written note of gratitude to the forum host. Not an email or text message, but hand-crafted snail mail. Of fifty audience members, apparently only one took up the challenge. It takes a little effort, the host certainly didn't expect it, and that's why the one stands out.

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

Excuse me, but I was next, P Post, Harper Collins, NY, 2006.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Home stretch

Hello? Anyone home? Over here!

Welcome to December!

(That reminds me, I must go get those Xmas cards...)

For the antipodeans in the crowd, it's all summertime BBQ's and a cool drink.

(Oh, that's right, next Tuesday, I've got that client Xmas shindig to go to...)

An impending well-deserved break.

(Cripes, those full year reports are due, and I'm off on the 18th...)

Celebrations and reflections.

(We're going to have to get our skates on to get those last P.O.'s through...)

A few more people you might find to help.

(The boss is screaming, we're so close to target, what can I do?...)

Peace and goodwill to all.

(Peace?! Arrgghh, I am FLAT OUT!!!)

If the last 11 months have been tough getting your client's attention...

Your dune challenge...

You have 18 working days until Christmas Eve. For the nearly-worn-out, you can have a little brandy-soaked nap Christmas afternoon. For now, take a breath. Map the next 18 days out. Fill them full of energy and disciplines that have proven to get you exposing your unique brand of help to the right recipients (the one's who'll pay). They deserve it. And it will pay for your pudding.

The ocean glance...

To Christmas card or not? Mince pies (or too cheesy?) A few drinks for loyal punters? One school of thought says everyone else is doing it now (so your efforts might be lost in the crowd). The other - it's the end of the year, and if you can't take a moment to recognise and thank those that funded your fun bus this year... (bah humbug!). Do something - a thank-you can be free with an amazing ROI!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales December!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Goldfish service

"The difference between try and triumph is a little UMPH!"

As my wise client Bridget reminded me last week

A hotel in Sydney asks guests when they check in, "*Would you like a goldfish in your room?*" They get to pick the fish.

A cable car company in Bavaria has its attendants yodel as they take customers up the mountain.

A kitchen installation business in Austria cuts postcard-size pieces of the benchtop material a client is about to have installed, then posts it to them with the words "*In 3 weeks, you will be the proud owner of a new kitchen, so go ahead and invite some friends round for dinner!*"

A financial planner in the US knew his client was about to fulfill a dream and buy a convertible, so sent him a tube of suntan cream and a card saying "*Don't forget to protect yourself - Happy travels!*"

In Zurich, a hotel that takes corporate bookings went to its best clients offices on the hottest day of 2000 and served ice-cream to their client's staff.

A Dentist in Bonn sprays his latex gloves with pleasant tasting mouth spray, and when he asks his child patients if they're brushing their teeth properly, he jumps in the chair and gets them to prove it by letting them brush *his* teeth.

All of these initiatives cost less than you'll pay for lunch today.

Your dune challenge...

Get creative. One clever, amazing, memorable, must-tell-my-friends-about experience you can deliver to a client. In the next 3 weeks. (There's dentists and financial planners on this list!)

The ocean glance...

A waiter in the US noticed that a lot of the coats he took from customers had torn hanging loops. He bought a range of coloured cotton, and while the guests dined, he would hand-sew them back. Took a few minutes. Not everyone noticed. But someone did. How much do you think that story travels? Don't say you don't have time or it's not your job. Show a bit of UMPH!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales December!

Stories drawn from *Amaze your customers!*, Daniel Zanetti, Redline Wirtschaft, Germany 2003.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

The Gold(man) standard

"You can have a great career in banking as an individual. But it won't be here.

The system weeds out those who can't play nicely with others."

Dane Holmes, Goldman Sachs Head of Investor Relations

You'd think the richest investment bank on the planet might be a haven for all-about-myself-ers. But Goldman Sachs, whose average salary for its 30,000 employees will reportedly be about \$US700K this year (in a recession), is famed for its teamwork.

One of its veteran bankers said *"We're trained to go out and brain-pick clients and contacts harder than anyone. You offer something in return, but you always come back and feed your colleagues information so we can all go to work trying to use the information to make money. Other banks staff tend not to share their intell - they regard it as power they can use to benefit individually. Goldman is not like that - it's a team effort."*

Some of you might find lessons from this cash machine hard to chew. But while the rest of the financial world took a Bex and lay down, Goldman grew its assets to \$1 Trillion dollars.

Your dune challenge...

Support a teammate today. Help them with a challenging problem they're facing. Go co-call on a client that needs extra love. Test one another on your market knowledge. Take them for a bubbles. Tip them into some information they mightn't be aware of. Give them an onya.

Feels good. Helps them. Galvanises team. Makes money.

The ocean glance...

'twould be nice to think that it's just teamwork that helped Sachs to get to the top of the pile. Other key success factors include 'being smarter than the average bear', being available 24 / 7 and analysing the numbers until your eyes bleed. The work ethic? Across the road from their New York Headquarters, they own hotel rooms for staff that have worked several days and nights straight to 'go catch 1 or 2 hours'. Not my cup of tea... but if you're serious about succeeding, could a fraction of the discipline go astray?

Have a **MIGHTY** sales December!

Inside the Goldmine, John Arlidge, The Weekend Australian Magazine, Nov 21 - 22 2009.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Working on the tan

Auto-pedaling.

I have a confession to make.

All this week, as you've diligently read your daily *Beach Run* to help you get in the right headspace to serve your customers and grow your business....

... I've been having a little r & r in Perth.

Fanatical though I may be in delivering these sales prods each day, I'm in need of perspective refreshment and battery recharge. Sure you understand.

But I have a standing daily commitment to you. So I wrote the past five BR's last week, and used this clever software to schedule them in advance. I don't normally do it because it's prone to glitches, and because I think the discipline of writing them daily makes them better. Assuming the system hasn't failed me, you haven't noticed.

Don't feel gyped. It took some work. But I promised you.

Your dune challenge...

There's something you have committed or will commit to doing for a client that's going to prove tough because you've got lots on or you're about to go on leave.

Plan in advance - who can help you? What advance warning do they need? Who'll pick up the slack in your absence? What early work can you do, cheat sheets can you leave, instructions can you deliver, scheduled appointments can you make for the moment you get back?

Is there any way you can employ an autopilot function?

The ocean glance...

Assuming I didn't get taken by sharks at Cottesloe or decided Swan River life is for me, Monday will see the resumption of real-time Adelaide-generated sales peloton support each morning to get you through to Christmas. The clarity that comes from periodic refreshment has flow-on benefits for your clients - have you got yours booked in?

Have a **MIGHTY** sales December!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Save your company

Take it upon yourself.

Last week, I joined family for dinner at a restaurant on the banks of the Swan River (sigh, the lengths I'll go to to bring you a beach run...). We'd booked to sit outside to watch the sun set. On arriving, we were told our table was still being used by a lunchtime party (biiiiig Christmas show), and given how much money they'd spent, the staff were reluctant to push them out. So they sat us inside with a vague promise of relocation when the others left.

Undeterred, we grabbed our drinks and went to stroll down to the river, only to be told by a stern security man that we can't do that. Getting miffed, we sat down and had to wait a while to get service. Hope almost lost, a young waiter appeared and transformed the experience. He spied the long lunchers leaving, got the table cleaned pronto, and asked us if we'd like to just grab our drinks and wander over (he'd take care of the rest). He took group photos for us, joked with us (without being overly familiar), gave us recommendations where to go afterwards for a coffee and got the orders correct.

He didn't have to do anything amazing. Just help us enjoy our experience, and don't be obstructionist.

He saved the restaurant from a grumpy punter savaging.

Your dune challenge...

Be the lone voice of conciliation, positivity and can-do-ness in your business today. Make a clients day by saying "*Let me take care of it all for you...*". Smile and laugh and show clients you love serving them. Get the orders right. Even if all around you is chaos and madness*, take the future reputation of your business and carry it on your shoulders.

Your colleagues might just join you.

The ocean glance...

Two other wonderful service experiences in WA - at a local pool with the kids, where the 18-ish counter attendant shone with happiness in a 15 second exchange, and at the Jetstar checkin counter, where, unprompted, the lady went out of her way to get our noisy family some extra seats together. Nothing free, nothing in the policy, nothing their bosses would ever see. Just did it.

Have a **MIGHTY** sales December!

* *Taken me a long time to work Cold Chisel lyrics into a Beach Run*

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Vision before action

Vision begets strategy begets actions.

If you haven't yet decided what you want to achieve in 2010, then it's a roll of the dice on whether your actions in this last two weeks of 2009 will help you.

Start with the vision - decide what you want, where you want to be, by the back end of next year. Job promotion, sales result, skill built, luxury purchased, market reputation achieved or mental satisfaction gained. Clear and specific. No more than three things. Closing date to achieve, December 31st 2010.

Then decide on three paths you can take to achieve each goal. Three courses of action, three methods, three assistants you can employ that will help you get there.

Finally, commit to three simple, distinct steps to kickstart each strategy. Give them a date stamp. Pick up a phone and call Caleb on Tuesday. Google Emma's company tomorrow morning. Make an appointment with Dean for January 19th.

Then go.

Your dune challenge...

Take 30 minutes today to turn 3 clear goals into 27 very simple acts.

The ocean glance...

Forward planning is easy to sacrifice. Goal setting gets poo-poo'ed. Not everyone that reads this will do it. My present to you - an imploremet (if that's a real word). Please do it. It's worth it. It's rare. All will thank you for it.

Have a **MIGHTY** sales December!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Tom Tom

Recalibrate.

Driving in WA last week, I had my first experience with Tom Tom (the GPS car navigation toy). I'm in love. Not always right (new freeways freaked it out), but amazing.

Here's what I loved most about it - when you took a wrong turn or ignored Tom Tom's instructions, it didn't call you an idiot. The first thing the screen said was something like "*Searching for alternate route*", then spoke the words "*At the next intersection, turn around*". If you didn't, it recalibrated again and looked for a new path for you.

Tom Tom knew you were the driver, and his (or her) place was to help you get wherever you wanted to go. Even if that meant constantly recalibrating because you ignored its expert advice... that's the service you paid for.

Your dune challenge...

You take pride in offering your clients the best solutions or advice you have... but sometimes they choose to ignore, flout or don't take up your suggestions. Recalibrate. Take a different route. How else can you help them? Should you deliver the same message in a different way, or is there a different means with which you can assist them achieve their goals?

At the next intersection....

The ocean glance...

Recalibrating sometimes means shifting your previously-held views or standards. New information has come to light, clients expect more of you now, competitors have driven change into the market. Take the impending festive period to recalibrate your views on what's needed to delight your clients and succeed in your market in 2010.

Have a **MIGHTY** sales December!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Accountable for asking

The 100% question.

Will you marry me?

What do you think - shall we get married?

Why don't we get married?

Let's get hitched, hey?

Would you like to do it?

Based on everything we've discussed, would you agree that marriage is the best way forward?

Why don't we live together for a while, see if the fit is right?

So, it sounds like we should get married next week, or would next month be better?

Well, the next step is marriage - what do you think?

The courtship goes on until someone takes accountability for the all-in question.

Will it be the customer asking, or you?

Your dune challenge...

In your own words, when you've gained conceptual agreement, when the objections have been unearthed and overcome, when they're grinning and nodding with excitement, when there's nothing left to do but find out if they are as keen for this marriage and the benefits it will bring as you think.... pop it.

Don't leave them hanging. It's doing them a disservice.

The ocean glance...

NO! The worst you'll hear is that they don't like green eggs and ham. Now you know. Now you can try and help them another way. You can try to understand if it's an avian allergy, or if they've just never tried them and are scared, or they think kosher is trendier, or they're on a diet, or....

Of course, there are other people waiting for your proposal - people who, given the chance, would love the benefits of a supply relationship with you. Can't move on until you clarify things here!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales December!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Thought tinder

"Of course, I could be wrong about all of this.

That's up to you to decide."

Mark Earls, *Herd*

I've been reading a fascinating book, *Herd - How to change mass behaviour by harnessing our true nature* (OK, my and your opinions of 'fascinating' might differ...).

There are a lot of thought-provoking ideas for sales professionals in there around the power of collaboration, why we are a 'herd animal' influenced more by peer interactions than glossy brochures, and that consumers don't exist in isolation (so don't base sales strategies on isolated opinions).

But my favourite comment is the one in red above. He prefaces the book with this - "*At the very least, I hope to make you think for yourself....*".

That's about all we can really strive for. Our 'limit of maps' is to provoke thought.

Your dune challenge...

Give a potential client a thought prod today. A considered opinion, a fresh perspective, an educated recommendation that demonstrates you've taken the client's situation, pains or goals into account, and are offering up some expert testimony for their mental jury to deliberate on.

It might be wrong (for this client). But put it out there. *You* believe it, right?

The ocean glance...

Earls closes his book with "*It's over to you now - take my version of things, rebadge, remix, steal, transform, rearticulate if you like... but only if you want to, that is.*" The choice is still mine, the consumers, to act... thank you for recognising and empowering it. (Might just give your ideas a little more thought now...)

Have a **MIGHTY** sales December!

M Earls, *Herd*, Wiley, UK, 2009.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Progress windows

"You don't make progress by standing on the sidelines, whimpering and complaining.

You make progress by implementing ideas."

Shirley Hufstedler

Time management gurus advocate dedicating uninterrupted blocks of time to complete important tasks. Focus, application, perspiration, single-mindedness.

But there are all these small windows in your day, time fragments between unmovable appointments, that can either be exploited or left to evaporate.

- The three minute window while the kids brush their teeth before you drop them at school is long enough to review and prioritise your daily to-do list.
- The 20 minute car drive to work can be spent listening to audio books, mentally and verbally rehearsing your first sales call of the day, or phoning the high-level client who gets into work before any of their staff.
- The 60 seconds it takes your computer to boot up allows you to lay your workspace out clearly to maximise productive workflow.
- The seven minutes you sit in a waiting room, or in the car before walking into your appointment - read product literature, refresh your knowledge of the client's situation, think of one great question you'll ask this person.

There's umpteen of them. You can't cobble these windows together into one continuous time block, but you can still plan to make them count for something.

Your dune challenge...

Commit to better utilising one time window you otherwise let fritter away. Build a skill, refresh your knowledge, consider an alternate perspective, devise a new service, think about why you've been successful, plan a step. You don't have long, but it still counts.

The ocean glance...

Any task you undertake in these small windows comes with a 'setup' and 'pulldown' time cost (even if it's just mental). To make the most of the limited time, give yourself structures and prompts to make every second count. A printed to-do list template, a list of people you'll phone from the car, an extra brochure or paper in your bag you want to review. Make it easy to make progress in the small window!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales December!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Tree trimming

See the wood *and* the trees.

My family and I just put up our Christmas tree. It's, errr, eclectically beautiful. A mix of 5-year-old's handmade decorations, posh baubles and candy canes - tinsel was banned this year (there's such a thing as too much bling).

I had the task of wrapping the tangled mess of wires that passes for Christmas lights around the tree. With my face mooshed into plastic pine branches, I did what I thought was a reasonable job of spacing the bulbs out and hiding the wires in the foliage. Looked great up close... then I stepped back and turned them on. Big areas with no lights next to super-bright patches of 5 bulbs clumped together.

The process of stepping back, taking a bigger picture look at your efforts, acknowledging the flaws, then jumping back into the fray with a plan to correct it, doesn't just apply to your festive plant decorating efforts...

Your dune challenge...

Stand back and look at your '09 sales result like it was a partially decorated Radiata Pine. What looks brilliant - where did the best results come from and how did you go about achieving them? Where are the dark patches - what's incomplete, or not looking quite how you'd planned, and how can you resolve to brighten those patches of your business?

Make some notes - date-stamped action steps - and before Christmas arrives, step back into the foliage for one last tweak of the decorations.

The ocean glance...

OK, so our tree will never feature in *Vogue Living*. Who cares - we had a ball doing it, and made the process a fun family (sugar-fuelled) event that the kids will look forward to again next year. Are you having fun, and endeavoring to make dealing with you something colleagues and clients will look forward to in 2010? Nice to have a flash tree, nicer to have fun trimming it!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales December!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

The chocolate factory job

"You only get one shot, do not miss your chance to blow,
this opportunity comes once in a lifetime..."

Rabbit / Eminem

A relative is seventeen years old; a really happy, positive girl studying her first year of law.

A few months ago, she applied for a part-time role to support herself through Uni. It was serving customers at an iconic chocolate factory. She was one of several hundred applicants, and her letter received a 'Dear Jane' rejection letter.

So she wrote back - *"Thank you very much for considering my application. I'd really like to get some feedback as to why I didn't get this role... would you help me, so I can improve how I approach future roles?"*

Said iconic chocolate factory called her immediately - anyone with the gumption to boldly, politely ask for constructive feedback was someone they wanted to talk to.

She is now worried about putting on weight from eating free-for-employees chocolate frogs.

Your dune challenge...

When you get the "Dear Troy" rejection letter, don't roll over. Ask boldly, politely, professionally and quickly - "may I ask why?" When a client says no, may you ask why? When there's no reply to your quote, follow it up. Is there something you can do to improve your chances next time? Something you're missing?

Don't take the first no as gospel. You mightn't change it... but you might. And you'll definitely learn something.

The ocean glance...

The letter didn't get her the job. It got her the face-to-face shot. That's all a letter can usually do. Face-to-face is the impact zone. Letters, emails, direct mail, websites, social media... lovely. Face-to-face - maximum behaviour change opportunity. Gun for it today.

Have a **MIGHTY** sales December!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

The lonely minority

No problem, *we're* OK, thanks Jack.

A radio newsreader was reporting on the potential impact of Cyclone Laurence on Australia's Kimberly Coast yesterday.

Describing the impact the Category 5, 285 kph wind monster could have, she finished the dire warning with "*Luckily, there is only one small town in the cyclone's path.*"

Yes. Very lucky. For you, me and 99.999% of the rest of the population that won't feel Mother Nature's wrath on this occasion. Not so lucky for the handful of people in that one small town.

Even when the bulk of your clients are happy campers, chances are there is one that isn't yet grinning with yuletide joy.

Will you help them, or will you write them off as the outlier that will always exist?

Your dune challenge...

Focus a little of your remaining '09 sales efforts to uncover and assist that one small remote community, that one lone client who is struggling to get your machine to do what they want or fully understand the application of your service.

I know you've got a party to go to, and there are big clients you're busy backslapping.

These poor souls aren't so lucky... but they've paid you to improve their luck.

The ocean glance...

I should imagine this one small town feels a mite lonely right now. Like a client of yours that hasn't been invited to all the Christmas parties, that hasn't received a bucketload of cards and is quietly closing up shop for a wee break. Go in, say hi, thank them for their (small) amount of business. No client should be lonely at Christmas.

Have a **MIGHTY** final few sales days!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Thanking the investors

"When you arise in the morning, give thanks for the morning light, for your life and strength.

Give thanks for your food, and the joy of living.

If you see no reason to give thanks, the fault lies with yourself."

Chief Tecumseh Shawnee, American Indian warrior

Because today is the last sales sprint of the year for some...

Thank you for investing your valuable time to read these daily e-prods. For the small amount of your hard-earned that has helped pay for the fun thus far. For being my gnawing guilt trip to get up and write them every morning. For sticking in there when I strung a couple of duds together. For the feedback you were generous in offering. For telling your friends and boss and customers. For giving me a soapbox. For delivering radio silence when I took it too far. For applying just one idea from one email for one customer. For letting me be focused and passionate.

For listening.

Your dune challenge...

For those going on leave or who have clients about to finish their year today, offer one last shout out in recognition of their efforts. Phone, pop by, email, text, tweet. Let them start the happy season with a smile on their dial, knowing someone is grateful.

The ocean glance...

For those hanging in until Christmas eve, there's still some customers that can do with your final few days focus (and I'll sprint with you to get to the line). For those not, have a very happy, refreshing and reflective Christmas break. My gift to you - 2 weeks email silence (what, the case of Moet never made it?). There are clients, colleagues and bosses that need your energy, passion and special brand of help starting early 2010 - get ready to deliver it to them under the auspices of 'sales'! I'll help you!

Have a **MIGHTY** merry Christmas!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Tact and consideration

"Athankya. Thankyaverymuch."

An Elvis impersonator.

At a fun Christmas party Saturday night, two things went wrong (I think you'll relate).

The first, someone received an anonymous Kris Kringle gift they thought stank. They tried to smile and hide their feelings, but after a bit of champagne and probing, they loudly made fun of it. Later, the dejected person who gave the gift explained why they genuinely thought it was great.

Second, a boss gave a 'thanks for your efforts this year' speech, and singled out someone they said did "*good work this year*". Trouble is, that person didn't think they'd just done good work... they thought it'd been "*bl**dy great work*". And went on to say so.

Well meaning intentions not translating into happy campers.

Opening of mouths without sufficient thought or gratitude resulting in hurt feelings.

Your dune challenge...

A client you're going to call on in these final days of '09 - have you planned well-meaning service or support or sales intentions for them? Taking into account their personalities, the situation they are currently in and the timing, are they likely to take your proposal the right way? Are you sure?

The final thanks-for-your-custom-this-year message you're about to deliver... is it sufficient, genuine and warm? Irrespective of your Christmas gift promotional budget, have you delivered a phone or face-to-face thank-you to your biggest clients (who mightn't feel satisfied with the generic Christmas mass mailer?). Forget *your* feelings - what will it take for the other person to feel sufficiently valued (and willing to invest more in / with you next year?)

The ocean glance...

If there's a skill I'm grateful for being taught by my folks, it is trying hard to express gratitude for the well-meaning intentions of others (even when you're faced with a tea towel as a Christmas gift). The purpose of delivering gratitude is to make the other person feel good. So if you fall short of the level of thanks they were expecting, it's a wasted effort. Err on the side of too much thanks this Christmas... it's not fattening!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day, and thank you for sticking with this final week of pre-Christmas sprinting! Nearly there...

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Shift the market

Get ready to step it up.

As a non-regular movie goer, it was a great treat to watch two films this past week.

The first, *2012*, was incredible for its special effects, showing of what might happen to the world if the Mayan's have it right. Three hours of jaw-dropping moments, lots of 'yeah, right!' scenes, but highly entertaining escapism.

Then last night, my wife and I watched *Avatar*. Ooof. The most expensive movie ever made has significantly raised the bar for special effects film making. You'd have to be a misery guts not to have been blown away by the spectacle, the scale, the scenery and how you couldn't tell what was real and what was computer generated. It made *2012*'s effects feel outdated. In a week.

Last year's special effects won't drop jaws for long. Client expectations never cease rising. What's come before has to be improved on.

Or people will stop paying attention.

Your dune challenge...

How are you planning to drop the jaws of your desired client group in 2010? To make them say "*Wow! That is unbelievable!*". Yes, I hope your Christmas stocking holds an amazing new piece of technology or a service concept that will turn heads. But if it doesn't?

Think more of, less of, faster, slower, more concise, more detailed, truly creative innovation, a souped-up version of old-school values, automation, personalisation, professional bespoke tailoring or a homely group hug event...

...what will you do to permanently shift the market's expectations of suppliers in 2010?

The ocean glance...

If the storyline doesn't support the effects, the movie will get canned. If it doesn't make money, it will be savaged. If it bombs at the Oscars, critics will have a platform to say "*told ya so*". If you shift client expectations with glitz and cleverness, you better be ready to back the sizzle with substance.... does your 2010 sales plan show you how?

Just a few more days to make it so!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day! (And keep your eyes peeled for 10 drummers drumming...)

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Determine next year's result now

"Let us resolve to be the masters, not the victims, of our history,
controlling our own destiny without giving way to blind suspicions and emotions."

John Fitzgerald Kennedy

Don't wait until you're sozzled with a sparkler in your hand to make commitments to yourself for 2010. Or worse, promise the earth on Jan 1, hung over, full of pain-averting good intentions.

Do it now. In the hour before you go to a long lunch today. Before you sneak out to get your Christmas shopping done. Before the relo's start lobbing on the doorstep.

3 clear, SMART goals - things personally important to you, that you'd really like to happen for you in the coming 12 months. For the outcome-focused, define *your* measures of success (110% of sales target, a spot on the victory dais, a client who'll lock into a preferred supplier agreement with you by July?)

For the process-focused, how do you want clients to speak about you? What will constitute a mighty work-life balance for you? How many people will you help each week, and who's first?

Then? Build the first steps. Write them down. Ten appointment's you'll make with existing clients or high-potential new clients during your first week in January. Five networking contacts you'll buy coffee for before anyone else realises it's a new year. One bold new service initiative you'll start planning and test-marketing on Jan 4th.

A considered personal goal and clear written first-step commitments to help you achieve it, all made in the sober light of day... now *there's* a mighty way to finish your sales year.

Your dune challenge...

What he just said.

The ocean glance...

The bulk of the sales world will fluff around today. They'll come back on January 4th, hug and kiss people, answer emails, then consider booking time in the coming weeks to write a business plan. But that's not for you, oh no! One hour today, that's all I ask. It is my gift to you (stingy, I know). It will generate compound interest. And you'll go into Christmas feeling in control and up-beat about what lies ahead. Have a go!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Rest and stretch

"Sometimes the most urgent thing you can do is take a complete rest."

Ashleigh Brilliant

There are no more windows left to open on the Advent Calendar. It's time to rest.

To the dedicated Beach Runners and Sales Cadence pedalers, knowing these Blackberry pingers get read and occasionally inspire positive, client-focused, business-building acts is a wonderful Christmas gift. (Getting paid is always kinda nice too...).

This is the half-way point of your Sales Cadence subscription. Some of the services you've invested in have been delivered at optimal cadence. Others, I'll be stretching creative muscles over the holidays to prepare for a big new year effort to deliver on commitments. Amazing what you can do when you make a public commitment. I hope you're enjoying the ride and run.

To my patient wife who hears me boot this computer up at frighteningly early and late hours... to my kids for just being... to my mighty clients for their support, friendship, investment and belief... to the supporters who back me in other ways... and to those that ever fell away or said no, for fuelling the stubborn beast within that is determined to prove them wrong....

THANK YOU.

Apologies to the author of the Irish blessing - I've butchered it for you;

"May all the early starts, late finishes and skipped lunches pay off for you in 2010;

May the happy clients come back with a friend;

May your invoices be large, your disgruntled punters few and your workload juuuuust right;

May your revenue line rise more sharply than your budget curve;

May your competition copy your last year's initiatives while you blaze exciting new trails;

May you remember all you've ever learnt, just at the right time;

May you catch a break and may you support a friend;

May your actions all be geared towards achieving the things important to you;

and until we meet in the inbox again, my friend,

Long may you love the client-serving ride!"

Have a **very merry Christmas**, and I'll get the peloton pedaling again from January 4th!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Why run

"You have no idea how good this feels! As an Aussie, you dream of winning it.

I am proud to have achieved this lifelong dream."

Dr Andrew Saies, Skipper, Two True, 2009 Sydney-Hobart Winner

A prosperous 2010 to you! I hope your break has relaxed, your thinking is clear, and your desire to make the most of your impending year's Oxygen intake is burning!

During the rest, I sat on the same stretch of Goolwa sand that first inspired this daily note, talking to a friend about business strategy and how he might support his sales team in 2010. We threw around some ideas, but we came back to a simple question - what did he most want or need them to do in the coming twelve months? From that point, you can look at what's already going well in the business or sales approach (to enhance or reinforce); what's not so flash (to develop or bypass); and what situations might arise or can be created to capitalise on. Plans can be built, KPI's developed, training and support initiatives created and implementation schedules rolled out.

But if you aren't clear about *what* you want? Bl**dy tough to build a plan to get it.

From now until July 1st, I'm going to deliver a daily reminder to you, asking you to invest thirty seconds to consider...

- what do you want to achieve this year? This week? Today? On your next call?
- are you clear about how you'll get it?
- is it the only way, or is there something else, different, better, fresher, no-one-else-has-thought-to-try-it-yet that you could run with?

I'll try not to be trite. Dress the messages up in interesting, educational, topical and sometimes oblique stories that carry themes you know to be true.

And I'll keep coming back to the three reasons I believe you should beach run.

Get you one step closer to your desired sales destination.

Keep you sales fit, focused and full of beans.

And to enjoy the view as you tread across the sand.

Breathe deep - your clients need you hitting your stride quickly.

See you bright and early tomorrow!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Beach café

Sun, sand, surf and sourdough.

At the spiritual home of the *Beach Run*, there's a basic new cafe where the Goolwa Beach Kiosk used to be. The guy who runs it, Olaf, is a model of German efficiency, sending out hundreds of cappuccinos and bacon'n'egg meals between 8am and sundown.

Three mighty reasons I think are driving its success;

- **The location is second-to-none.** He is where the hungry people are (the beach carpark) and the aromas and sea vista's you can see the cafe enjoys entice ample people to the counter.
- **The market is hungry for what he has.** Who paid to eat breakfast by the sea 30 years ago? Now, early morning beach walkers, runners and salty surfies pay handsomely for a warm brew and fruit salad.
- **Loyalty - repeat and referral business - is filling seats.** Customers followed him from his previous riverside cafe, told their friends, knowing whatever he whips up will be good. Seek to first serve those that already love you.

It's a simple timber structure sending out good, consistent food promptly, and while not exorbitant, is charging a premium for its simple fine fare.

Today's sand sprint...

Identify one prospective new client you want to get in front of this month. When are they back, where will they be, how will you get in front of them? Have you got something they need, want, will value (and is it packaged simply and transparently enough for them to get immediately)?

A loyal client with the power to return and spread the word - what's your first point of 'happy new year' contact going to be? From the first conversation, how will you show them that not only will they enjoy the benefits that 2009's partnership with you brought... but that you've upped the value ante?

Deep blue ponderings...

There's a community petition on the counter at Bombora's, encouraging people to lobby the council for more surf lifesaving patrols on the adjacent beach. Find a way to support your clients passions, be an active do-the-right-thing member of your community, and look at innovative ways to build the swarm of potential clients that can surround you. Your 2010 success will need creativity!

Have a **MIGHTY** day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Don't block the purchasing path

You are a potential obstacle.

7 feelings I experienced yesterday leasing a new laptop;

- **Disgruntlement** - at having to call the lease company, who didn't bother to tell me my old lease had expired (and would happily go on charging me full tote odds for old equipment)
- **Pleasant surprise** - at the helpfulness, comprehensiveness and cheery disposition of the lease lady I spoke to, who prearranged authority for me to go purchase from Gerry's megastore
- **Importance** - by the rapid attention I received from a nice computer sales bloke who asked great qualifying questions
- **Ease** - when he guided me to a machine \$300 less than the one I was thinking of
- **Disquiet** - sensing that, despite giving me a couple of freebies, he was mentally calculating his commission and scanning the shelves for extras I should take
- **Frustration** - despite being pre-approved, having to wait nearly 30 minutes for paperwork to be faxed, copied, filled in triplicate (and then being asked to consider another extra product at the last minute)
- **Gratitude** - that I only have to go through the process every few years

I was always going to buy... you didn't have to make it hard.

Today's sand sprint...

When the existing client calls for a top-up, a referred prospect turns up on your doorstep, or someone asks for your help, be conscious of the barriers that are easily and unconsciously erected. The trip-up fine print, the qualifying period, the desperation people smell when you try and turn a small sales opportunity into something bigger.

Be clear, prepared, prompt and transparent with people right from the get go. If there's a trap for young players, make them aware of it before they stand in it. Guide purchasing choices based on client wants (not what's earning you a fat bonus).

Deep blue musings...

Both organisations got a whole lot wrong in the sales process (this time and in previous purchases). They aren't the cheapest way for me to get a computer either. But I bought from them anyway. It was fairly easy, and I knew the hurdles to negotiate. Imagine if someone had that ease-of-buying process AND an amazing, transparent, proactive customer service ethos.... Here's your shot - how will you take it today?

Have a **MIGHTY** day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Moving money elsewhere

"It's hard to switch banks, but when you feel strongly about something, you tend to endure a bit of pain to get your point across."

Mark Hewitt, AFG Mortgage Broking

On the back of criticism of Westpac boss Gail Kelly's public declaration that she actually banks elsewhere, the financial institution is paying a high price for raising its interest rates higher than any other bank.

Fairfax media reports that AFG grew its broking business in December by helping disgruntled Westpac customers shift to other lenders. AFG's Hewitt says it's not that a 20 point rate rise would normally bother people too much or trigger bank swapping - it's a protest against the perception that Westpac is being unnecessarily greedy compared to the other market players.

Today's sand sprint...

Stand in the shoes of the customer you are just about to visit, with a basic understanding of their goals and circumstances... would *you* buy what you are selling? Does a customer sense that you are a true believer in what you are offering (would you bank at your own bank)?

Are your fees fair? Not just the \$ you're asking for, but the time you've requested from the customer, the effort you need them to invest, the risk they'll be taking with you? If you carry a price premium, and you can't really justify it against comparable products or services, what are you injecting into the customer's world that carries that extra value?

Deep blue musings...

Think about what triggered you to change a supplier in your world. Caused you to buy a different car, change GP's, go to a different hairdresser, not use the same real estate agent twice. The things that they did poorly, or didn't do, or the other guys did better... might any of your customers be able to say that about *you*? Good time to conduct a client satisfying behaviours review - avoid expensive protest marches!

Have a **MIGHTY** day!

Westpac customers walk, Peter Martin, InDaily, 6/1/10.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Vindicated (or got outta jail)

"The key was, they were out there just waiting for us to get out,
not trying to get us out."

Nathan Hauritz, current cricketing hero

I'm allowed one cricket-themed *Beach Run* each year (non-fans, bear with me)...

2 days ago, Australia pulled off a stunning come-from-behind win against Pakistan. After the first day, with Australia electing to bat first and getting bowled out for a dismal score, the world was savaging captain Ricky Ponting's 'dumb decision' to bat on a green pitch that was perfectly suited to bowlers.

Backs to the wall and needing a miracle on days 3 & 4 to get back in front, a couple Aussie batters stood up and made big scores against a passive opposition. Then, as the wicket started to deteriorate, Ponting sent his bowlers in to clean up the opposition (as Ponting said, *'it's very hard to chase big scores in the final innings - that's why I didn't bat first'...* genius).

He had a plan. When early results looked shaky, few believed he was right. If he'd failed, the merciless critics awaited.

He didn't. And the boys didn't wait for the win to come to them... they chased it.

Today's sand sprint...

I hope that, come Monday morning, the line of people at your door wanting to give you cash is long. Just in case it's not, don't passively wait. Decide *now* on your full year sales strategy and the proactive daily disciplines you'll apply to grab the wins. There'll no doubt be moments when things look wobbly. So be certain that your rationale is sound now. That's where the courage to continue will come from.

Deep blue musings...

Ponting has 'telegraphed his punches' - opposition teams now know that given the choice, he is unlikely to ever bowl first. The die is cast and transparent. The team can build their game plans knowing this. Whenever he wins a toss, he'll enjoy a psychological advantage because he's got clear values and rationales. Have you?

Have a **MIGHTY** day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Does that answer it?

"Some people fail exams, not because they aren't bright,
but because they fail to answer the examiner's question."

Drew Provan

Drew Provan's *Giving great presentations* highlights a common trap presenters fall into. It's when an audience arrives expecting to hear someone discuss a particular topic (because the title or preamble led them to think it), and they then get a different presentation ("*While the topic of this talk is X, I'd much rather tell you about Y.*").

You'll often see presenters pay lip service to the agreed topic title, before venturing into an area they are more confident or interested in. Even if the side-tracked talk contains different pearls of wisdom relevant to the audience, the expectation is that you will answer the questions and deal with the topic that you said you would.

(You promised!)

Today's sand sprint...

The client you're stepping in to see this morning - do you know exactly what they are expecting to hear, or have answered, or get fixed by investing their valuable time to see you? Is the presentation you're planning to give them really going to address it? Make sure you've married the two before walking in the door.

When a client asks you a question, answer it the best way you know how, then return with "*does that answer your question?*" Not only do you find out if you're on the right track, you give yourself an extra few seconds thinking time.

Deep blue musings...

Whether it's a tender response, a Powerpoint presentation, a proposal you've written or a sales spiel you're planning, pull back intermittently and check that what you're focusing on actually covers what you know they want to hear. The point isn't to showcase your cleverness - it's to answer the clients questions.

(PS and if you don't know what they want to hear? You know what to do...)

Have a **MIGHTY** day!

D Provan, *Giving great presentations*, Easy Steps Limited, UK, 2009.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Three incentives

"A thing worth having is a thing worth cheating for."

W. C. Fields

Economist wunderkind Steven Levitt's best-selling *Freakonomics* delivers odd and clever perspectives on why the name you give your child is linked to their chances of economic prosperity, and why people steal bagels from the honor basket in the company tea room.

He discusses *behavioural incentives*, and says there are three types of incentive;

- **Economic** - do something good, get paid more. Do something bad, get fined.
- **Social** - be viewed favourably (or frowned upon) for behaviours
- **Moral** - feel good about yourself, or feel hollow and guilty for your actions

Levitt says that we often implement financial incentives in order to influence peoples behaviour (for example, a 'late fee' for parents not picking up their children by the prescribed child care centre closing time). But what it can do is allow people to mentally substitute this for what may have been more powerful intrinsic incentives (like guilt or being seen to be a bad parent).

Are the purchasing incentives in your business clear, and is the mix right?

Today's sand sprint...

For the client you're about to encourage to buy, consider their economic incentive (what will the purchase make or save them, short and long term?). What's the social incentive (who will they impress, attract or repel)? What's the moral incentive (why will they feel good, who else will they be able to help)? What's the negative flipside to each of these incentives if they *don't* purchase?

Consider your sales story - are you overly focused on one incentive, thereby allowing a client to mentally trade off against another? If you're charging a price premium, will the client feel less obligated to do the morally right thing by you post-purchase? If you are asking them to be a reference site, will they want a discount? Check the mix.

Deep blue musings...

Levitt's contention - if the incentive is powerful enough, most (if not all) people will go outside normal rules to get it. Cheat. A sales consideration - are the incentives you tailor and enunciate to your client powerful enough to motivate them to go 'outside the rules' to buy from you (blow their monthly budget, circumvent standard purchasing pathways, have a quiet word in the boss' shell-like)? Don't encourage policy flouting, but think about why they might (and how you can help them) salivate at the thought of joining your client team!

Have a **MIGHTY** day!

S Levitt & S Dubner, *Freakonomics*, Allen Lane, US, 2005.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Maslow and the laptop

"The fact is that people are good, if only their fundamental needs are satisfied. Give people affection and security, and they will give affection and be secure in their feelings and behaviour."

Psychologist Abraham Maslow

Setting up my new laptop yesterday, I was struck by the application of Maslow's *Hierarchy of needs* (the 5 layers of human needs and the order they supposedly must be satisfied in).

First, my **physiological needs** were met (I got to keep breathing - the machine didn't electrocute me). Then my desire for **security** kicked in (I'm not loading anything on here until the antivirus software is activated). Next, I needed to feel a sense of **belonging** (where are my emails? My internet? The support application for Toshiba - where are you, I might need you!)

Then came **esteem** (how clever am I, getting this new baby running all by myself! Downloading Firefox & Thunderbird - technological guru, I am). Finally, my need for **self actualisation** - using the machine to do what I bought it for. Write more of these emails, do what I think I'm good at, grow and learn and produce.

How will Maslow's Hierarchy fit your next conversation with a prospective client?

Today's sand sprint...

Consider the other persons needs. *Physiological* - are they likely to be hungry or sleepy, and how can you fix or plan around that? *Security* - are they comfortable in their surroundings or could you be a perceived threat (and how will you deal with this)? *Belonging* - will you feel like a friend, how will your offering help them bond with others? *Esteem* - can they master your solution and feel clever quickly? Finally, *self-actualisation* - how will you put them in the drivers seat to start achieving and growing ASAP?

Deep blue musings...

Try getting a client to focus on your clever solution when it's 4pm and they haven't eaten since breakfast. Or explain how you'll help their business when they've just been told by their boss that their job is in jeopardy. Deaf ears. You can't always positively impact the needs of others, but you need to be aware of them and plan where you can.

Have a **MIGHTY** day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Welch's candor

"To get candor, you reward it, praise it and talk about it.

Most of all, you yourself demonstrate it in an exuberant and even exaggerated way."

Jack Welch

Management Godfather Jack Welch's book *Winning* could fill a month of Beach Runs. One of the most powerful lessons Jack says he learnt in taking GE to the top of the corporate pile, was the value of *candor*.

Welch says candor is a vital skill for both leaders and contributors to practice. Cut the B.S. Don't sugar coat. Tell it like you think it is. Jack says that pussy footing around only erodes trust, and that rather than trying to protect the feelings of others, we actually do it to make *ourselves* feel better. But it is those individuals who have the courage to be forthright, to speak their mind, that ultimately achieve more, faster (and paradoxically earn more supporters).

Speak the truth with forthright courage today.

Today's sand sprint...

If you think the proposal your team is building has a gaping hole in it, say so. If you think a supply partner is wrong and their thinking may be harmful, say so and explain why. If you're asked your opinion, get off the fence and offer what you really think.

Welch has a strategy for doing this - phrase your candor with a question. "*This is a problem - how can we fix it?*" "*I don't see this working for these reasons - what alternatives do we have?*" "*This is fantastic - how can we make it work even better for you?*" But don't hold back your true feelings just because you think you might hurt another's - it has longer term negative consequences for everyone.

Deep blue musings...

Welch - "*It's true that candid comments definitely freak people out at first. It may scare and upset people, and yes, it could (metaphorically) kill you. That's a risk that only you can decide if you're willing to take.*" It worked for him and GE. Who's the most candid person in your professional world, and will you take a leaf from them today?

Have a **MIGHTY** day!

Winning, Jack & Suzy Welch, Harper Collins, London 2005.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

What to be

"What is the best way to *be*?"

Tony Ross' *The Little Princess*

(I have daughters, OK?)

Throughout my sales career, I've tried being different things.

The considered diplomatic planner (that can be perceived as sluggish or fence-sitting).

The just-get-moving trailblazer (that can seem haphazard and leaves others behind).

The schmoozy business card swapper (that just felt wrong).

The isolated "*if I build it, they will come*" creative intellect (that without enough people contact actually attracts very few).

The speak-on-behalf-of-all vox pop (that can get you cut off at the knees).

The keep-my-mouth-shut crowd observer (that blends into the background).

The go-straight-to-the-client-CEO sales driver (that miffs the lower order).

The nurture-bottom-up-support bloke (that makes friends but sells little).

The marketer trying to sell (not enough real person stuff).

The seller trying to market (not enough structure or research).

The niche application specialist (gets boxed and boring).

The cross industry generalist (too broad and diluted).

The Maid's advice to the little princess - "*Oh, I don't know - what do you want to be?*"

Today's sand sprint...

Try and answer that question today. For yourself. Your business. Your customers.

Deep blue musings...

Sales Broccoli - can't say you don't like it if you've never tried it. Step out of your comfort zone and try a different way this week (if only so you quickly step back in, having determined what's not your preferred way to be). No unique combination of ways will please everyone. Get over it. The best you can hope for is a skin you're confident wearing. *That's* attractive and sustainable.

Have a **MIGHTY** day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Take some guidance

"It's my job to preserve not only the leaders jersey, but also the team."

Johan Bruyneel, Lance Armstrong & Team Radioshack's cycling coach

The mighty Texan cycling machine is Down Under again, giving elite athletes everywhere a lesson in how to keep it real with the droves that come to support him.

In the weekend paper, Armstrong commented on his supposed feud with former team mate Alberto Contador (Contador is accused of not respecting the role his team played in helping him win last year's Tour de France).

Armstrong - *"My commitment to riding the Tour last summer was that I was going to listen to one person. It wasn't myself, and it wasn't Alberto. It was Johan. That's why you have a head coach in sport - don't go off and make your own plans or do your own thing."*

"That's the way I won seven Tour's, by listening to this guy, so I did it again."

Today's sand sprint...

Listen to the boss today. Ask a question pertaining to the bigger picture. Get their updated direction on how you can best serve the larger team. Look for a way to help them achieve their goal (which, if they're worth a pinch of salt, is all about helping their team achieve something mighty).

Sure, you're clever and know your customers needs and your business better than them. But this is what they're paid for - to apply your cleverness to best effect for the greater good of your organisation. Don't make their life difficult - they are a VIP customer who can help or hinder you.

Deep blue musings...

Armstrong - *"(With a great coach), if you have the talent and the preparation, it almost always works."* I don't know how great your coach is, but there's not much you can do about it. Continually developing your talent and preparing to apply it in the right places thought? *That's* in your court. Sell strong!

Have a **MIGHTY** day!

Contador's feud claims rubbished, Scott Walsh, The Sunday Mail, Adelaide, January 17th 2010.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

For the introverts

"I'm actually a bit of an introvert. I need a lot of time alone.

The advice I'd give is to just throw yourself out there, like mud against a wall."

Former US President Bill Clinton

In her book *Self-promotion for introverts*, business coach Nancy Ancowitz doles out advice for the camera-shy. By *introvert*, Ancowitz uses the Myers-Briggs definition - introverts are people more energised by spending time by themselves (introspection), where extroverts draw strength from and thrive on the company of others.

To succeed in 'extroverted' roles such as sales, Ancowitz suggests introverts consider how they structure their day;

- **Be realistic and mindful of your energy** - think about what you can achieve through contact with others in a day without completely draining yourself.
- **Plan downtime between social interactions**, for reflection, analysis and preparation for your next meeting.
- **Don't compare yourself to extroverts** who can bounce effortlessly from meeting to meeting.
- **Include activities in your sales day that play to your introverted strengths**, such as one-on-one client-focused conversations, prioritised list making or insightful proposal generation.
- **Get support to help you keep getting out there** - a coach, mentor, networking group.

Today's sand sprint...

For the introverted, don't set yourself up for a horror sales day by copying the planner of your extroverted colleague. If the thought of fifteen client meetings by lunch gives you the heebie jeebies, scale it back. Your business still needs the same ROI for employing you, so apply your introverted skills of planning and follow-up to make the most of the fewer conversations you'll begin.

For the extroverted - you've got the energy, you love the conversations... get as many going today as you can. Don't leave half-finished chats and a trail of destruction in your wake, but use your inherent bias to get things moving fast.

Deep blue musings...

I've taken the MBTI personality profile in a room with 100 other sales colleagues, where only two of us came up as 'introverted'. We both went on to kick great sales goals (along with a lot of our living-large colleagues), but in this organisation, there was a real preference for a certain personality style. If schmoozing doesn't come naturally, you can still make it work - you just have to plan for it!

Have a **MIGHTY** day!

Self-promotion for introverts, Nancy Ancowitz, McGraw Hill, USA, 2010.

Killing meetings

All in favour, say "aye".

Nick Renton OAM is an author, a stockbroking expert and a man who's attended his fair share of meetings.

In his *Guide for Meetings and Organisations*, Renton outlines some simple rules for how to kill a club or regular meeting forum;

- Don't turn up
- Turn up late and unprepared
- Find fault with office bearers, but don't put your hand up for any responsibility
- Don't give any opinions in the meeting - save them for water cooler criticism afterwards
- Don't actively seek to involve new members
- When others roll their sleeves up, howl about how cliquy the group is

Group get-togethers play an important role in professional sales organisations, but they need everyone to chip in.

Today's sand sprint...

Give a bit to the collective effort this week. If you're in a group sales meeting, make the most of it. Turn up on time, participate, offer positive ideas and suggestions, don't snipe, be prepared to take on some responsibilities for furthering the collective cause, engage and encourage others to help.

If you haven't got a group session planned, consider starting your own forum. Internal colleagues, networking partners, even a client group for a focus meeting. Solicit the opinions, ideas and efforts of others to help your business and client group - collaboration wins.

Deep blue musings...

Any meeting comes with those not contributing their fair share, and those that love the sound of their own voice a little too much. Find a happy middle ground - don't blend into the walls, but avoid dominating (you don't learn anything new when it's you doing all the talking!)

Have a **MIGHTY** day!

N Renton, *Guide for Meetings & Organisations*, Lawbook, NSW, 2005.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

You're always on

"People judge you by your actions, not your intentions.

You may have a heart of gold, but so does a hard boiled egg."

Anon.

At an Advantage SA *Speakers in Schools* training forum this week, I heard professional speaking coach Andris Bilkins give some tips on delivering successful presentations.

One point he made was that the greatest presentations still have the potential to become shipwrecks *after* you've finished your spiel. You give your thanks, the audience applauds, you're feeling positive, and you let your guard down. Then a curve ball question you hadn't anticipated comes, or you're overly casual or dismissive with a follow-up comment, or you mingle with the crowd and project a different persona to your onstage character. And the audience senses the disconnect. And they judge you harshly for it.

To the audience, you're never really *off*.

Today's sand sprint...

Consider how many opportunities the client you're about to see has to judge you. In the first impression you make on meeting, the questions you ask, the answers you give, the proposal you suggest, the calls to action you clarify. Your exit from the building, your interaction with their secretary, your follow-up email, your company's website, their friend who they know dealt with you. Your responsiveness to their phone message, your phone greeting, your message bank note. Your tone, your content, your politeness, your efficiency, your eloquence, your accuracy.

Tough gig, this sales business. The advantage you have? You're aware of judgment moments, and can plan to positively impact them.

Deep blue musings...

Given that it's tough to keep a mask on all the time, maybe the best advice is not to wear one. Be candid, honest and let you shine through. The best, most professional version of you that you can muster, but for an audience to sense genuineness and congruence in all their judgments of you, best to *keep it real*.

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

Thank you to Advantage SA (formerly SA Great) for their generous hospitality, and Andris for his wisdom!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Bloom's Taxonomy

Do they get it? Are you helping them *really* get it?

The teachers in the room will know all about Bloom's Taxonomy - the seminal education theory that defines how to set and measure learning objectives.

Educator Benjamin Bloom said there are 6 levels of 'getting it' that you can test in a student;

- **Knowledge** - the ability to rote-learn facts, figures and terminology
- **Comprehension** - the ability to recite information back in the right context
- **Application** - the ability to use the learned knowledge to solve problems
- **Analysis** - the ability to break learned information into meaningful parts
- **Synthesis** - the ability to combine learned information with other information sources, draw inferences and come up with new ideas
- **Evaluation** - the ability to give your own 20c worth on the information and offer alternative opinions (you're an expert now)

There are various levels of 'getting it'. Are your sales presentations just helping a client to get to the knowledge stage, or do you help them work their way through the layers?

Today's sand sprint...

Consider the client you're about to speak to today - are they clear on the bare bone facts of your offering? Could they recite back the 3 key relevant benefits? Do they really understand how it can help them solve a problem / fill a need they have? Can they see how different parts of your solution fit into and beautify their world? Could they tailor a holistic solution for themselves incorporating your offering with other things on the table?

Finally, do they *get it* enough to suggest ideas on how you can improve your offering for future conversations (and are you brave enough to ask them?)

Deep blue musings...

These 6 learning objectives are part of Bloom's 'cognitive' domain. Another learning area he defines is the 'affective' domain - a measure of a student's willingness to participate in the learning process (levels range from giving 'passive attention' to 'valuing' the information to 'characterising' or spreading the gospel via actions and word of mouth). To positively impact someone's affective domain requires one of your greatest sales skills - the ability to build enthusiasm in a learner. And that takes *your* enthusiasm for what you're doing today - good luck!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

Information on Bloom's Taxonomy sourced from Wikipedia.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Football, meat pies, Kangaroos and Holden Cars

"When you're standin' by your mate..."

John Williamson, *True Blue*

Because Australia is having a lie in tomorrow, a special afternoon *BR* edition...

Mates. Mates look out for one another. Enjoy each other's company. Have a laugh together. Go a mile to lend a hand. Forgive flaws. Invite you round for a sausage. Turn up to things they sometimes don't want to. Tell uncomfortable truths. Cheer you on. Have rituals and unwritten understandings. Give you a heads up. Go in to bat for you. Never do the dirty on you. Most of all, are there when you need them.

In 2010, you'll spend a bucketload of time working with and for people that you can be mates with... or not.

Can you do with another mate?

Today's sand sprint...

Build a mate. A client, boss, colleague, networking contact, significant other. Lead off and do something matey. Invite them to something, pump their tyres up, show how you're looking out for them, lend a hand with something outside of your job description. Make it clear that you'd like to grow and tighten your relationship.

For existing mates, remind yourself of the commitments and codes that come with that special relationship. Don't wait for them to invite you for a cold one - offer to turn up to the working bee or look past a flaw that might otherwise be fatal in a fledgling relationship. That's what mates do.

Deep blue musings...

Tomorrow is a day of reflection on how wonderful it is to live and sell down under. Use it as an early reminder - the sales year is now 1/12 over. Clear your head and consider what needs to happen first thing Wednesday morning to get your sales flying this year. Onya, mate!

Have a **MIGHTY Australia** day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Truth hurts and helps

Tough but necessary love.

After our recent discussion about Jack Welch's views on *candor*, a Beach Runner in B2B sales emailed and said they'd tried being candid with a client, only to have it blow up in their face.

Our Beach Runner's reseller client hadn't been stocking their shelves with the optimal level of a particular product and was constantly running out (thus missing out on sales from punters wanting this particular brand). When this lost business opportunity was candidly conveyed to the shop owner by the sales professional, it went down like a lead balloon ("*don't tell me how to run my business!*").

The wise Beach Runner (not that there's any other type...) let the client cool off for a period, then booked a review meeting with them where they discussed her client's fear of being lumbered with stock that didn't sell. By offering the client an exchange program for any future stock of a certain age that wasn't moving, along with offering to run some training for the client's staff in how to sell and advise *their* clients on this product line, the formerly disgruntled store owner happily agreed to stock the higher levels of stock.

Candor - didn't start out pretty, but with time and two-way communication, got the right outcome.

Today's sand sprint...

Don't shy away from the hard conversation just because you think someone will get their nose out of joint. If your intentions are honorable and in the client's best interest, have the courage to take some fly-off-the-handle emotional flak.

Stay positive and work to keep the dialogue open. Allow cool-down time, then try to re-open the conversation to discuss and generate ideas to help allay the fears that are guiding the other person's behaviour. (And if you don't know what those fears are? You know what to do...)

Deep blue musings...

Sure, for every happy ending like this, you'll get a bomb site with fallout that you may never recover from. But if you are sugar coating perspectives that you know are valuable purely because you are paralysed with fear that you'll upset the other party and maybe damage the friendship... you're in the wrong business. Because you aren't truly helping anyone. Think longer term than the kneejerk reaction.

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day! Thanks and congratulations Christine!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Morrie

"Being fully present? Learning to pay attention? How important could that be?

I now know that it is more important than almost everything they taught us in college."

Mitch Alborn, *Tuesdays with Morrie*

Without wanting to turn this into *Oprah's Book Club*, there's some soul food you should consider reading. *Tuesdays with Morrie*. Warm'n'fluffy, insightful, sales-relevant and a quick read.

I won't repeat all the life lessons that Journalist Mitch Alborn took from weekly deathbed conversations with his old Sociology Professor, Morrie Schwartz. But the above philosophy was something Morrie stressed the importance of.

That when I'm talking to you, I shouldn't be thinking about what's happening this afternoon or what's for dinner or how I can part you from your money. To fully engage you, understand you and search for mutual help areas - I've got to give you 100% focus *right now*.

Today's sand sprint...

Be fully present for the next person you speak to. Put down whatever's in your hands, mentally put your sales strategy to one side, look them in the eye, think about what they're saying or their situation, ask them a relevant question, then listen fully.

That sounds too easy. Challenge you to do it all day. If you can, I'll wager your sales day will be one of the greatest you've ever had.

Deep blue musings...

Can't help myself - one other pearl Morrie offers - that satisfaction doesn't come from flash cars or awards or trinkets. It comes from "*offering others what you have to give*". And the one thing *everyone* has to give - a little time and attention. Donate some to a client or colleague today and enjoy real satisfaction.

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

M Alborn, *Tuesdays with Morrie*, Hodder Australia, 1997.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Negotiation strategy

"Two way movement to produce a win-win."

David Oliver's definition of negotiation

You're about to meet with someone you know will test your sales mettle by trying to get as much as they can for as little as possible. Negotiation expert David Oliver says there are six elements to being an effective negotiator;

- **Prepare** - know what you want, what can you offer, who are you dealing with, what is important to them, where they will seek to negotiate, what their hot buttons and non-negotiables are, where you can make concessions and where your limits lay
- **Rehearse** - write down key things you'll say, say aloud what you've prepared, run through some 'what-if's' and get colleague feedback before the real deal
- **Describe your position** - put forward your offering to the other party and ask 'can we move forward with this as it stands?' If 'no', ask questions to qualify why and what they're after
- **Propose** - a solution that takes into account their requests *and* covers what you want
- **Bargain** - make a concession to meet a request they have and state your return concession from them
- **Agree** - clearly confirm the terms you've agreed on, verbally and in writing. Be positive about the concessions you are both making and the benefits they bring

Today's sand sprint...

Don't wing it. If the client you're about to visit has a track record of asking for discount or better trading terms or is just a hard-ball player, walk through these 6 steps before you or they walk in the door. You will leave money on the table if you don't.

Deep blue musings...

Oliver - *"Remember, it's the buyer's job to challenge all prices. It's a seller's job to ask for profitable prices. If concession is necessary, trade reluctantly and slooowly."* Give away the farm and it's harder to achieve your goals. Don't generate profit, and you can't fund more of your unique brand of help for more needy recipients. It's in your future client's best interest to negotiate!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

D Oliver, *How to negotiate effectively*, Kogan Page, UK, 2006.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Ben and Jerry's

"To make, distribute and sell... euphoric concoctions...."

Part of Ben & Jerry's mission statement

Jerry failed twice to get into Med School. Ben kept getting fired from fast food jobs. They both hated running and loved eating. So they took a \$5 correspondence course in ice-cream making, set up shop in a dilapidated gas station, and started selling their extra chunky product. Last year, they sold nearly US\$250M worth of ice cream.

Ben has a diminished sense of taste, so he relied on 'mouthfeel' - chunk size - to develop an icecream he liked. They make their ice cream flavours extra strong so he can taste them. In a market already full of ice-creams, getting chunkier and stronger generated sales success.

Apple's i-pad is thinner. Samsung's Plasma TV is bigger. Intel chips are faster. Bose speakers are louder and clearer. Branson is bolder. The guy who sells me bread is smiley-er.

What '-er' are you for your clients?

Today's sand sprint...

Complete the sentence you'd like your clients to utter to colleagues this year - "*You know my supplier Troy? You've got to give them a call - they areer than anyone else at*"

Now - prove it. What do you need to do today to make it so?

Deep blue musings...

Researchers John Katsaros and Peter Christy say that when you are '....er' than the competition, you first appeal to 'power users' - the early adopters that want the biggerfasternewer things before everyone else. Supply this group for a bit, and you get your shot with the masses. Hold your nerve and keep a chunk of the masses engaged, and you'll pick up business with 'the long tail' - the laggards that just keep trickling in. But it's the power users that first look for the '-er' - are you appealing to them?

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

www.benandjerry.com.au and *Getting it right the first time*, J Katsaros & P Christy, Praeger, US, 2008

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

First impressions

"Not everyone is going to read the footnotes, or indeed the whole book."

Bjorn Lomborg, Scientist

Picking up the tin lids on the third day of a new school year, I overheard some Mums swapping notes about a new teacher. One of them said *"Oh, I don't know, I think it's still too early for first impressions."*

Too early for a first impression? Nope. You had one. You got it in the first few seconds. You've spent the last three days trying to figure out if it's right and being validated, or if there's more to the person than first met your eye. You mightn't yet be willing or able to put into words what you're thinking, but your gut is telling you something.

It might be wrong. Time will tell. But they don't get an extended trial period for the first impression.

Today's sand sprint...

Do a 'first impressions audit' - pick 3 clients or colleagues and recall the very first time you met them. Do you remember the first impression they created in your mind? With the passage of time, how accurate has your gut proven to be? Did they have to work hard to recover from a less-than-stellar start, or are they now less shiny than they first appeared?

Now consider how fast a potential new client assesses you - are you prepared to create a head-start first impression?

Deep blue musings...

I remember meeting an old Managing Director for the first time - he'd jetted in from interstate to address our regional team. He and his entourage were half an hour late. He strode into the room and said *"Ladies and Gentlemen, my sincere apologies for keeping you. Our plane was fogged in at Sydney. That of course is no excuse - we should have caught a plane last night to make 100% sure we were here on time."* Muffed first impressions are recoverable - it's a question of recognising the faux pas and taking personal accountability for it!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Lollipop, lollipop

"It is a physiological need of children to eat sweets."

Enric Bernat

In the 1950's, Spanish confectioner Eric Bernat commissioned some market research to help him figure out how to revive his flagging sweets business.

The research gave up two facts. One - children like fruit-flavoured sweets. Two - mothers hated their children eating lollies because they get messy and sticky in the process. So, Bernat invented a lolly on a musical stick - the Chupa Chup.

Two facts at loggerheads. Someone willing to think about a solution to satisfy both.

Today's sand sprint...

Look at a client that's doing business with you (but you know could do a lot more). Write down two facts you've uncovered from your own 'market research' with them. They want this. They need that. They hate this. They love that. They are restricted by this. Their market could do with that.

Tie two facts together with a support idea. They're short staffed but need ongoing training - can you offer some as a partnership benefit? They need expert advice but can't afford your bells'n'whistles option - can you support them with a DIY guide? Build them a Chupa Chup.

Deep blue musings...

Two other very clever things Bernat did - he invented the 'hedgehog-style' dispenser that his salespeople urged retailers to put as close as possible to the checkout to maximise impulse buying. He also commissioned Salvador Dali to draw the Chupa Chup logo still in use today (nice to have *him* on the payroll). Unique, quirky, easily accessible, thinking for the customers. Suck on that a while...

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

E Ross & A Holland, *100 great businesses and the minds behind them*, Random House, Sydney, 2004.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Last time we spoke

Now, where were we?

This week, the most popular shows began returning to free-to-air TV. Many pick up from where they left off last year. *The Mentalist*, *Grey's Anatomy*, *Desperate Housewives*, *Burn Notice*, *Brothers and Sisters* (I, of course, watch none of these... mmm.)

One of two things happens at the start of a new series - they either have a highlights grab with a voiceover saying "Previously on (said trashy show)...", or they write into the characters dialogue a few lines that allow new viewers to get a mental picture of where the show has been. *Days of our Lives* pioneered this - you could stop watching the show for years, then pick up where you left off within five minutes (or so I'm told).

With everyone up to speed and remembering the back story, they can blaze new storyline trails.

Do you do that in your sales conversations?

Today's sand sprint...

Before stepping into your client meeting today, review your back story. What was said, what was promised, where were things left last time you met.

Plan to make comment on the back story early in the conversation, to make sure you both start a fresh conversation from the same point. "Last time we spoke,"

Deep blue musings...

Not only does starting with the back story help clarify any misunderstandings, it demonstrates you were paying attention, and that you've prepared for *this* meeting, and that you made the effort to remember the things important to *them*. Voiceovers early in the conversation are a professional and useful sales discipline.

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

(And can you believe George died?!)

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Business review methodology

Ask - Study - Guide.

At a government briefing this week (sounds important, hey!), I heard a consultant from Enterprise Connect describe the process they apply to review, diagnose and offer recommendations to businesses to help them achieve better results.

Their free business review process has 3 stages;

- **Internal analysis** - a learned consultant will ask you questions about your business, your market, your operations (including result metrics), your strategic directions, key issues you face, trends and your forecasts
- **External analysis** - the consultant then undertakes some independent industry / sector analysis, looks at benchmarking data and uses diagnostic tools to give them qualitative and quantitative data about where your business really sits in the market
- **Recommendations and implementation plan** - they then create a report incorporating their research and expertise to advise and guide you on ways you can choose to improve your results

Tell me you know and believe, let me do some homework to validate and add to it, then I'll offer some ideas that I think could help. A Government sales process. I like it.

Today's sand sprint...

For the next client you think you'd like to help, prepare to do an internal analysis - plan questions you need to ask about their business, market, goals, challenges and optimism.

Then go independent - do some homework, review industry data, compare like clients, spot trends for them, assess the fit between available products / services and their needs. Be the analyst they don't have on staff.

Then offer your recommendations, verbally and on paper. Describe the rationale, the way forward you'd advocate, and what the next steps are.

Deep blue musings...

A question came from the consultant audience - *"how does the government follow-up to make sure the recommendations are implemented?"* Still a work in progress, that one. But it needn't be for you. Don't leave it at *'let me think it over'* - if you believe in it, be prepared to be the gentle prodding reminder for this client (that's part of the service!)

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

Thank you to my hosts *Enterprise Connect* - offering great free support services to Aussie SME's - www.enterpriseconnect.gov.au.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

The tentpeg act

"If I had a hammer..."

Peter, Paul and Mary

Put up a tent before? You spend ages clearing ground, unpacking bits, laying it all out, getting poles in, guidewires attached and standing the thing up. But if you don't do one simple, critical thing - hammer in the tent pegs - it will blow away.

There's an opportunity you face multiple times in a sales day to do what I'll call the *tentpeg act*. It's the difference between a nice chat and a long-term effective one. It presents immediately after every meeting, seminar, training course or conversation you have. It takes between 30 seconds and 5 minutes to do.

It's the moment where, all by yourself, you take a pen or stylus in hand and consider what just happened, what you learnt, what you need to do next to make the most of it, and you *write down your action commitments*. What, with who, how, by when.

Tentpeg acts are easy to put off (*"I'm sure the wind isn't strong enough to blow this stuff out of my head, I don't need to write it down."*).

Yes it is. Yes you do.

Today's sand sprint...

At the end of your next staff meeting, when the boss says 'thanks, everyone', and people hurriedly gather their belongings to vacate the room, hammer in a tentpeg. Take an extra moment and consider the 2 or 3 most important things you learnt, can use, need to do, and write down your commitments in time-allocated slots in your diary.

After the next conversation with a client, when you jump back in your car ready to drive off to the next appointment, hammer in a tentpeg. What follow-up is needed, what information do I need to remember for next visit, how else can I help this person. Diarise it.

Deep blue musings...

You spent so much time and effort getting the tent up. Tentpeg acts take an extra 60 seconds. If you're worried you'll forget, build yourself a reminder. Write 'next step' at the bottom of your meeting agenda. Stick the word 'tentpeg' on your steering wheel between calls. Diarise a 5 minute appointment with self after each meeting. Too many potentially amazing tents are tumbling across the plains right now 'cause no-one bothered to secure them with a simple final act... not you!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

A considerations cascade

You have to put your undies on before you do up your pants. (Unless you're Superman).

Simple sales success cascade for you to consider;

Everyday,

your

Goals

(the things you want, the way you want to feel, how you'd like to spend your days)

will determine your choice of

Actions

(the steps you'll take, the appointments you'll make, the to-do list)

which, to be carried out at the right level for the required time, need

Disciplines

(sticking to the plan, doing first things first, saying no to sidetracks)

that, because they are hard to maintain, require

Support.

(maps, prods, reminders, encouragement)

Egads.

Today's sand sprint...

Apply the cascade to something you want to achieve in your role today. Getting a client onboard or knocking over a task or feeling happy-tired come 6pm.

Are you clear on what you need to do today to make it happen? Are you ready to roll up your sleeves and ignore the interruptions that will potentially side track it? Do you have a system or tool or person who's going to keep you on track until it's all done?

Deep blue musings...

Humble observation of the most successful sales professionals I've had the fortune to work beside, study or interview - consciously or not, they follow this cascade. Different folks trip on different steps - some aren't prepared for the disciplines, others fuzzy on their goals. But step through it -and if your goal is important enough - the cascade will quickly become clear. Egads!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Purpose of a survey

A penny for your thoughts.

When you poll an audience, there are a few things you might hope to gain;

- **Insight** - uncover what people are thinking, doing, feeling, are challenged by or want to achieve. Maybe you can help them. Maybe you can share responses.
- **Engagement** - asking questions shows you're willing to invest headspace considering (even addressing) things important to others. That's magnetic.
- **Seed-planting** - guiding questions down a path gets your target group thinking in a way they otherwise may not.
- **Defusing** - give people a soap-box to voice specific displeasure; a chance to cry on someone's shoulder. Get it off the chest - maybe we can move on.
- **King-making** - if someone is leading the way and justifiably proud, here's a chance to brag about it (we all want to show off our shiny side).
- **Visibility** - a questionnaire is marketing material. It'll reek if it doesn't have genuine client-serving purposes, but it's got your name on it, and it adds to or withdraws from your reputation piggy bank.

Today's sand sprint...

Take your audience's temperature. Go whole hog and employ the services of a market research specialist* or collaborate and build your own survey to better understand what's bothering or exciting your clients.

Not quite ready for the mass responses? Start with one punter. Ask slightly larger, broader, holistic questions of the next client you visit. About their goals, their fears for 2010, what they like and don't like in a supply partner, or what they know about a new line of technology (that you happen to be preparing to launch an offering in).

Ask. Listen. Consider. Thank. Then - find a way to respond.

Deep blue musings...

Asking the questions is one thing. Interpreting and deciding how to act on them, a whole other. The bare minimum post-survey activity - gratitude and a commitment to keeping them posted once actions are formulated. Then do it. You created the expectation for action by asking - don't overpromise and underdeliver!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

* If you need a name, I know a good one.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

5 D's of Task Management

Ladies and gentlemen, if you'll form an orderly queue please...

Because you are smoking hot at your sales job, the days are getting busier. Phones ring, clients request, bosses ask, colleagues lean and innovations spill forth from your noodle. How to fit it all in?

Tweaking a system I've pinched from Julie Morganstern's writings (time management gun), here's 5 categories you might try slotting your day's activities into;

- **Do it.** Right now. It's important. It'll help meet a need of someone who will pay you handsomely in return. Priority 1.
- **Dump it.** The opportunity cost is too high - forget it. Doesn't get you a step closer to your goals or help another. The world won't end if it doesn't get done.
- **Divert it.** We can't all delegate to an army of mignons, but there might be others better positioned, more qualified or less busy who can knock this over.
- **Diarise it.** Get it into the to-do list in a firm timeslot. Then move on.
- **Downsize it.** OK, so you overcommitted and can't make good on your large promise. Fix it by keeping the intent and modifying the actions. Get the most important bits done, but apply a reality check.

Today's sand sprint...

Scan today's to-do list and write *do*, *dump*, *divert*, *diarise* or *downsize* next to every task. Cross the dumped stuff out with black text. The diarise actions - move them into the calendar, then cross them off too. The diverted stuff - note who you'll ask to take these on and by when (and if they won't? Preferably... dump it). The downsized - write down what portion *must* be delivered (by when), and what's being removed.

Finally, the do's. Allocate them a number (1,2,3...) according to which is the biggest, most important, potentially most impactful item.

Then start at 1. Only when you've done number one should you start number two.

(Cheesy but memorable)

Deep blue musings...

The dumped actions list is the most contentious. Not for what you write down (that stuff really needs to go), or for what you elected not to put into this category (guarantee you haven't pruned hard enough). It's for what you are *mentally* putting on this list without actually writing it down. Reflection time. Study. An appointment with yourself to review the business plan. Booking a coffee with a learned colleague. Setting new goals.

Maybe you think it's too whimsical to write down. It's not. It's sales gold. Have the courage to pen these acts (and not in the dumped list!)

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Patients like me

"Given my status, what is the best I can hope to achieve, and how can I get there?"

Founding principle, Patients Like Me

Jamie Heywood is an engineer from MIT whose brother developed ALS (Lou Gehrig's disease) in his 20's. When his brother lost the battle, Jamie decided to create a service that better served patient support needs *and* gave the US Health Department and industry better information about the human impact of different disease states.

Heywood set up a website, www.patientslikeme.com, that lets patients tell their stories. The website converts these individual stories into meaningful categorised data. He marries patient perspectives and happiness levels with medical facts and stages of disease progress.

Not only does this create communities where suffering people can feel they are not alone; it helps health economists and disease researchers plan their efforts based not just on government-collected morbidity and mortality data, but on real patient stories and (with a clear understanding of their health circumstances) what *they* actually want to achieve.

Do you ever assume all your sales 'patients' want is a cure, when maybe you can focus on helping them achieve a happiness measure important to them *right now*?

Today's sand sprint...

Look at the reality the client in front of you is experiencing today. Is a sales 'cure' able to be affected by you quickly? If so, marvelous.

If not - if it's a pipe dream hamstrung by some insurmountable obstacles or just a remote chance at a future time - what can you do to increase their happiness index today? Help in a smaller way, offer guidance or a contact, give them hope, or even just make them feel they aren't alone?

Deep blue musings...

Don't misunderstand Heywood & Co.'s motives here - if they could prevent ALS ever affecting anyone again, I'm sure they'd jump at the chance. But this service is built with big dose of reality. Not everyone can be cured. Not everyone wants to propped up to live with their circumstances for the next 20 years. But given where they are, what can they be helped to achieve, and how can you help them do it? *That's* the health system question Heywood says isn't adequately addressed... can you help your clients deal with it today?

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

Jamie Heywood's talk, "*The big idea my brother inspired*" can be seen on TED MED talks - www.ted.com

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Happy?

On a scale of 1 to chuffed...

Tipped into this Trivial Pursuit-winning fact by my Father-in-law last week - Bhutan (little land-locked country in the Himalayas) is governed with the guiding philosophy of Gross National Happiness (GNH).

More concerned with how happy its citizens are than its Gross Domestic Product, Bhutan is officially rated as the happiest country in Asia and the eighth happiest in the world. I won't profess to have the slightest idea how the devoutly Buddhist nation achieves this collective state of joy, but I am intrigued by the idea of a happiness index.

Where would your clients put *you* on the how-happy-do-they-make-me scale?

Today's sand sprint...

Consider the client you'll sit across from later today - when asked '*which supplier makes you happiest*'... is it you? If not, who is it? Why? What are they doing or not doing that gives them a grin?

Do you even know what will make them happy, both today and longer term? Can you ask? Can you try?

Deep blue musings...

One answer may come from the fact that Bhutan's population has only recently been granted access to TV. As much as I like an eye-squaring vege session late at night after a mentally challenging day, the plasma noise-making machine is a source of great distraction, much rubbish and plenty of negativity. Can you try removing those things - distraction, rubbish, negativity - from a clients world today?

Shiny happy people... (REM - sorry).

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Managing sales grief

"He that conceals his grief gets no remedy for it."

Turkish proverb

While I doubt she designed her model to be applied to sales trainwrecks, Dr Elisabeth Kubler-Ross' *Five Stages of Grief* will be no stranger to seasoned sales professionals.

The Kubler-Ross model suggests that people deal with grief and tragedy in five stages;

- **Denial** - *"No. Surely they didn't reject my proposal. This is a mistake."*
- **Anger** - *"I can't believe it - how stupid are they?! Don't they realise this is the best deal they'll get!"*
- **Bargaining** - *"OK, maybe I can go back with a counter-proposal. I'll undercut the winning bid. I'll offer a free 12-month warranty. I'll find a way to make them see the light."*
- **Depression** - *"Phhhht. B*gger this job, I've had enough. I'm going home early - why bother trying."*
- **Acceptance** - *"You know what? C'est la vie. The fit just wasn't right. I don't like it, but I can live with it. There are other people I need to help. Let's get moving..."*

Kubler-Ross' contention - you can't rush (or slow) the grieving process. But if you're aware that *it is a process you will work through*, you're safe in the knowledge that acceptance will ultimately be reached.

Today's sand sprint...

Blaze into this sales Tuesday secure in the knowledge of three facts;

1. **You will get another 'no'**, even if you're the best Rainmaker there is. Someone will reject the help you've invested significant time and effort showcasing to them.
2. **You will experience grief stages.** You'll be miffed, livid, staggered, flabbergasted, tempted to scramble and down in the dumps.
3. **You will reach acceptance.** And when you do, you can help others.

Deep blue musings...

The good doctor says not everyone goes through all five stages of grief, nor do they always happen in this order. But she believes everyone goes through at least two. Knowing that you and your colleagues *will* go through these stages, have you got a support strategy ready to help you cope? A clear pricing policy to obviate your kneejerk bargaining reaction? A buddy to help nurse you through depression? A regular sales campfire forum to vent anger? You potentially can't avoid or expedite the stages, but you might minimise their negative impact within your team!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

Kubler-Ross, E. *On Death and Dying*, 1973, Routledge, ISBN 0415040159, via Wikipedia.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

I'd love to know

"Life's most persistent and urgent question is *"What are you doing for others?"*."

Martin Luther King

In a remarkable days trading yesterday, I heard these three questions asked. They came from community leader enlisting grass-roots support; a sales professional asking of their client; and from a leader asking it of a sales team member;

- What sort of impact is that having on you?
- How can I support you further?
- How do you think that went?

It's one thing to write about questioning theory.
It's another to hear these very simple, oft-ignored opinion-soliciting pearls in action.

Today's sand sprint...

Ask. Great. Questions. Will you try?

That's the question worth 55% of your sales grade.

Deep blue musings...

Now, maybe not everyone shares my level of excitement at hearing great sales questions *actually being used*. But think about the last time you truly felt connected to someone - when you felt understood and valued by another. Boss. Colleague. Partner. Client. Kids. How did they make you feel it? Bet it wasn't by telling you all about them and their cleverness. Or even by physically fixing your problems.

What if you made your client feel understood and valued and connected to you today?

Please. Ask?

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

Grassroots campaigning

"Never separate the life you live from the words you speak."

Paul Wellstone

Paul Wellstone was a Professor of Political Science from Minnesota who, from humble community organiser beginnings, successfully campaigned his way into the US Senate with one of the biggest swings seen against a popular incumbent. Tragically, he was killed in a plane crash during his second term in office. However, his methods for mobilising support to affect change are now studied by membership-reliant groups and political aspirants all over the world. The Wellstone method.

Wellstone believed in three keys to running a successful 'power building' campaign;

1. **Grass-roots organising** - lots of face-to-face conversations with those constituents whose support you need. Ask each person about what's important to them, and share your story of how-you-can-help in return.
2. **Progressive public policy** - clear messages about what you believe in, how you can help and what your priorities are. That you repeat. Over and over and over.
3. **Electoral politics** - determining who the biggest decision makers and influencers in your world are, and building a plan to enlist their support.

Can these 3 steps apply to help you build 'power' in your sales role?

Today's sand sprint...

Consider the activities you have planned for today. Do they include;

- One-on-one discussions that clarify a client's needs, wants and circumstances?
- Sharing your beliefs about what you represent and how it can help in the clearest possible way?
- Planning and executing a strategy to enlist the support of key clients, major stakeholders or network hubs?

The more clients onboard, the more power you and your business have to help others.

Deep blue musings...

Before his death, Wellstone said "*We need people who are engaged and willing to become leaders.*" Who will make the choice to enlist both grassroots and boardroom support, all the while never losing sight of what they stand for and their desire to help. That's how he sold himself into the US Senate - can you try it to sell yourself into more client-supplier partnerships?

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

Thank you to the FSU for generously sharing this sales wisdom!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Lie on the bed

"I am front-of-house. I am always on stage, always, always."

Hotel Housekeeper

A large global hotel chain, with over 15,000 rooms cleaned by over 3,000 housekeepers, wanted to know what made their best housekeepers, well, the best. So they got their top 8 housekeepers in a room together - English, Haitian, Portugese - and asked them how they know when a room is clean. *"The last thing we do before leaving a room - we lie on the bed and turn on the ceiling fan."*

Err, why?

"Because that is the first thing a tired guest will do after a long day. They walk in, flop on the bed and turn on the fan. If dust comes off the fan, then no matter how sparkling the rest of the room is, the guest might think it was as dirty as the top of the fan."

Lie on the bed you just made for your customer. See your offering as they will.

Today's sand sprint...

Just before you hand over the keys, proposal, instruction manual or the resume, consider the circumstances in which your client will view it. Will they be tired, stressed, expectant, energised, fearful, rushed, distracted? Given that (and you should have an idea), how does your offering actually look? Is it presented in the right format, at the right time, with the right language? Does it relieve and reassure?

Take one last look from the perspective you think your customer will have.

Deep blue musings...

Why do these housekeepers consider themselves 'front of house' when most of their work is done without interacting with the hotel guests? *"If there are children staying in the room and they leave their toys lying around, we make a little scene with them. We put Pooh and Piglet on the pillow together. Pooh will have his arm in a chocolate candy box, Piglet will have his on the remote control. The children will come back and imagine Pooh and Piglet have just hung out on the bed all day, snacking and watching TV."*

Do you apply the same finishing touches to your work as these housekeepers?

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

M Buckingham & C Coffman, *First, break all the rules*. Pocket Books, UK, 1999.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

The mesh event

"I love it when a plan comes together."

Hannibal Smith, *The A Team*

A guest at an Adelaide Hills retirement village community centre opening on Friday (that's where all the cool kids hang out), I was inspired by the jigsaw-precise fit of my surroundings. Residents, company staff, suppliers and community friends sipped and nibbled while a string outfit playing suitably refined tunes in the background.

Aside from the Centre being flash (Billiards, bar, hair salon, visiting medico's room and gym with plasma TV), everything about the event said 'community'. The drinks were sourced from local small-parcel producers; the local parliamentarian and alternative SA Premier opened the space; the company staff gave personal tours to guests who they consider part of *their* community; and as I drove out of town, I spied a sign denoting this company's sponsorship of the local bowls club.

In his speech, the Managing Director said words to the effect of "*we hope this space will be a meeting place for our village community, and also be somewhere for other local community groups, like the RSL or Scouts, to convene*".

Company values, the product offering and the sales methodology meshing beautifully.

Do yours?

Today's sand sprint...

Take a look at your sales offering. Crystallise its main benefits - the values it professes to uphold. Connectivity? Peace-of-mind? Security? Speed? Pain-reduction? Prestige? Upskilling? Wealth generation? What is it that you believe you stand for more than (or are better at than) the competition?

Now - is your sales approach or the promotional event you've built meshing with the message? Do you apply sophisticated video conferencing to demonstrate your tech-savvy solution? Are your community values reflected in your choice of coffee-shop meeting venues? Are you a gold-standard trainer if your product is designed to help clients educate others?

Check the mesh.

Deep blue musings...

One other thing this MD said - their completed centre is the result of their business investing during the GFC, when others in the industry chose to sit tight. They had a clear vision, they chose to back their strategy when it would have been easier to delay, and now they (and their clients) can enjoy the fruits of that investment.

When no-one else is investing enough time with clients, or in developing their business plan, or planning a bold sales initiative because it's too expensive, too hard, too busy... can you?

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day! Thank you to KeyInvest and the team at Woodside Lodge - a remarkable team and a speccky spot!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Lemon tree love

"Lemon tree, very pretty, and the lemon flower is sweet..."

Peter, Paul and Mary

From where I type, I can see a lemon tree.

Lemon trees are somewhat counter-intuitive. Prune them back to the point that would kill most trees (a 'man prune', my wife calls it), and they thrive. Wee on them, they love it. Forget single annual blooming - many fruit all year round. And that beautiful golden fruit is inedible (until you figure out how to utilise it).

But they still apply plant fundamentals. They need water. Sun. Reasonable soil. Protection from borers.

Get the basics right, pander to their peculiarities, and you'll harvest bountiful crops.

Got clients like that?

Today's sand sprint...

The next long-standing client you'll see - are you still remembering the fundamentals? Punctuality, smile-in-your-voice, planning the right questions, their need for you to deliver a positive ROI for their valuable time?

Then their peculiarities. How do they like to be greeted? Do you have to laugh at the same old cheesy one-liner? Is there a little dance you have to respectfully go through to get to the mutual benefits point?

Apply fundamentals and respect the counter-intuitive bits important to *this* person.

(Don't wee on them though. Bad sales juju.)

Deep blue musings...

The neighbours lemon tree overhanging my fence has lots of fruit. But they're dry - poor juicers. Old tree needs a prune and water, maybe Don Burke. It survives, but without someone paying attention, the harvest will continue to be poor quality.

Don't let existing clients become poor juicers just because you think the tree is laden with more-where-that-came-from business... your *personal attention* will determine sales fruit quality!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

(Random aside - one of the names I considered when figuring out what to call this business (42MSR) was "Lemon Tree Learning". Sadly, didn't hold enough a-peel. BOOM BOOM! Ah, my peculiarities...)

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

PB

"We haven't set a medal target. Our target is for every athlete to achieve their personal best."

British Winter Olympic Team chef de mission Andy Hunt

Inspired by the fearless lunatics hurtling headfirst down the Skeleton track at Whistler, consider the Olympic athlete's aim of achieving a *personal best*, and decide what you could PB in today.

Most potential new clients contacted.

Fastest or most concise follow-up delivered.

Most positive greetings in a day.

Highest number of colleagues thanked.

Bravest sales approach made.

Best pain-unearthing question ever asked.

Highest ever ratio of pre-call plans built: sales conversations had.

Most opportunities asked for.

Greatest ever adherence to the prioritised task list.

Most intense focus on how to attract and retain super clients.

PB enough times, and not only do you ultimately win a medal... you love the ride.

Today's sand sprint...

Plan to PB today. Pick your sales discipline. If you've no idea of where your benchmark is, set it today. Then you've got something to measure yourself against.

Sales results are nothing but the byproduct of sales behaviours. Measure the behaviours. Strive to improve them daily. Watch the results follow.

Deep blue musings...

Emma Lincoln-Smith, Aussie Skeleton team - *"When you're at the top of the track, you have to think you're going to do well, you're going to fly. You have to trust yourself. If you have any doubts at all, you'll crash and hurt yourself."* Are you confident you can do a PB today? Is there more practice needed, more skills to be developed, more knowledge built, to give you that confidence? PB prep begins now.

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

My PB challenge today - to have a client conversation: email ratio of > 1. If I publicise it... more likely to happen!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Not now, but here's when

"Never put off until tomorrow what you can do the day after tomorrow."

Mark Twain

Looking for unique *Rainmaker* interviewees, I emailed a local politician yesterday asking if he would share how he successfully sells himself into the public chair. I was only half confident of a reply - there's an election in 3 weeks, so he's kind of busy (but, I am in his electorate, and I vote, so....).

Within 2 hours, one of his aides emailed me back, thanking me for my request, and saying that the Parliamentarian would be keen to help. However, as I probably could appreciate, he was very busy over the next 3 weeks, and asked if it would be OK to do it after the big day.

The clincher - he said he's penciled a date in the MP's diary (gave it to me), and he would get back in touch to do the interview then (hope that's a core promise).

If you have to say no, have the courtesy to explain why (we usually understand) and specify another solution.

Today's sand sprint...

Say no to something today. A request that's too taxing on your time without sufficient potential return. Something that doesn't make the top 3 in your prioritised to-do list. An unreasonable discount demand.

Explain why - existing commitments, an already full schedule, your clear and rational pricing boundaries. Then offer an alternative - recruit a helper, suggest an alternate date, offer a less-expensive alternative. If need be, recommend the guys down the road. Don't *not* offer them a solution today.

Deep blue musings...

Handballing the request to the aide could have made me feel like I wasn't worth his time. But the speed of the reply, the positive tone, the commitment to future personalised action, all took away any potential feelings of being 'handled'. You don't have to do everything personally, but you need to ensure the customer doesn't feel like they've been treated *impersonally*.

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Spoon feeding audit

"It is our choices that show what we truly are, Harry, far more than our abilities."

Albus Dumbledore

The two-way tough love *Beach Run*.

There are now just 16 weeks until the midpoint of 2010, and the end of your current *Sales Cadence* subscription. On the members-only website right now (and via inbox nags) are 290 *Beach Runs*, 28 *Rainmaker Interviews*, 22 *42 Lists*, 18 *S&M Tools*, three *MIGHTY White Papers* and, by next week, one *MIGHTY Sales Survey* report. Sometimes odd or less relevant, but always with your sales support needs in mind.

Big question - have you got 2/3 of your \$90 worth yet? Has the reading time and \$ investment generated a sufficient return for you?

Two reasons for asking. If you don't feel it has, please tell me what you might like from this service to make the remaining four months as valuable as can be.

Second - take ownership. You've had spoon-delivered over 360 pieces of sales thought food prodding you to think and act and clear any I-don't-know-how excuses to grow your business.

360 trips to the waters edge. More to come. Only you can choose to drink.

Today's sand sprint...

Audit, offer feedback and apply advice today. Here, for sure. But also with other suppliers in your world. Who've you invested with that's been delivering for a while. A service provider - are they delivering on your initial expectations, have you told them so, and are you actually applying their widget / service / advice in the way they suggested?

Your boss - are they giving you what you need, have you asked for anything different or made suggestions about alternative support methods? Gulp - are you actually applying their wisdom? Audit, feed back and apply.

Deep blue musings...

If you have got your \$59.99 worth - I'm stoked! Tell me. No, better yet, tell someone else. Even better, call me, and we'll discuss how you might get a much bigger return, err, on a slightly bigger investment in my support services.

And if you haven't (and aren't prepared to try the above)? Thank you very much for reading for the last 8 months - I respectfully recommend you now click 'unsubscribe'. You're wasting your time, and it's too valuable to waste reading something you'll never act on.

The peloton is about to become the breakaway group ... I hope you'll stay with the leaders, 'cause there's more sales support ahead!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

The Funnel

Concentrated client groups always start with diluted prospecting.

Brand strategist Nigel Malone has written a great series of articles on *Anthill Online*. It's called *The ten best strategic business slides of all time*. My favourite slide is *The Sales Funnel* *.

It simply shows the diminishing return you get as prospective clients move through the sales funnel. That your 100 prospecting calls may result in 20 information requests that may turn into 8 appointments that might result in 3 sales that might end up in 1 repeat client. The AIDA model. Maximise **A**wareness to generate some **I**nterest from which you'll filter genuine **D**esire that will translate into a smaller number of sales **A**ctions.

You can work on your sales game to 'fatten the funnel neck' - improve your prospecting: sales ratio. You also need to be strategic about where and how you're prospecting to ensure you're not filling it with un-prospects.

The key point - it is a funnel. And if you don't fill it yourself, you get *nothing* from it.

Today's sand sprint...

Go back to sales prospecting fundamentals. How many people do you need to start a conversation with to be confident of generating the sales target you've set yourself for today / this week / this month / this year?

By all means improve your chances. Go for repeat business. Referrals. Strategically target those with the biggest need / clearest desire / available funds to buy. But you have to continually, proactively fill the funnel, and ensure you've got a plan to help you keep it full from this point forth.

Deep blue musings...

Tribes and word-of-mouth counterpoint - *"If I build something super-good, they'll come! They'll tell their friends! I'll never have to prospect again!"* Maybe. I hope so. And if you can sit around all day tweaking your offering to make it completely irresistible with no sales effort needed, more power to you. But if you can't - if you're paid to get out and generate new bums on seats - don't put all your eggs in the word-of-mouth growth basket. Make 100% sure of your number - top up the funnel daily.

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

* Here's the link to Anthill's free online newsletter and the slides - recommended (slightly out-there) reading.
<http://anthillonline.com/the-10-best-strategic-business-slides-of-all-time-8-%E2%80%94-the-sales-funnel/>

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Occupy another's head

"I just locked myself away and formed a little diary and experimented with voices. I went away, found the character, then came back."

Heath Ledger on creating The Joker character

A quiet Saturday night in, I watched *The Soloist*. Jamie Foxx plays Nathaniel Ayers, a mentally ill man who once played Cello at the Julliard School of Music and ended up sleeping rough on L.A.'s Skid Row. Foxx said to prepare for this role, he spent weeks observing the real Ayers from a distance, studying him, adopting his nuances, to the point where he would wake in the middle of the night and actually think he *was* Ayers.

Hollywood actors go to extraordinary lengths to get into character. Vigo Mortensen lost so much weight for *The Road* that his Director was seriously concerned for his health. Adrien Brody sold his apartment and car to get into character as a man who'd lost all his possessions for *The Pianist*. Hillary Swank lived for a month as a boy to make her *Boys don't cry* character believable.

Now I'm confident you're not quite earning their salaries, so you can have that extra iced vo-vo. But are you prepared to fully immerse yourself in the role of 'valuable supply partner' for your audition with the next client?

Today's sand sprint...

For the client you're about to visit, get into character. What will this audience most want to see from you? Interest (how will you show it)? Honesty (how will you demonstrate it)? Wisdom (how will you apply it and help them benefit from it)? Enthusiasm (without overdoing it)?

Take a leaf from the thespians. Do some pre-movie homework. Try walking a few metres in the client's shoes. Practice. Imagine you are the supply partner they've always dreamed of. Get into character.

Deep blue musings...

You can argue that you shouldn't have to *act* for clients - just be yourself. But not all clients will understand or want the version of *you* that stepped out of bed this morning. So there's tweaking and refining and planning needed, because to get this client-supplier relationship moving (which is what you want, right?)... it's *about the audience*. Make-up!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Overlook the irrelevant

Not everything at the dessert bar is appealing.

Two weeks ago, I bought a book that I was sure would generate a good *Beach Run*. Called *CEO of Earth*, it's a story-based treatment of effective branding principles. It's enjoyable, quirky, and provokes thinking about what underpins great brands.

But I've struggled to extract a simple lesson to fit this shorthand sales education forum.

I could stretch the friendship and make a tenuous tie between the story's lessons and how they are relevant to a sales professional (Lord knows it's been done before).

Or I could move on. More appropriate stuff awaits this morning jolt.

Ignoring the less relevant is a powerful time management technique.

Today's sand sprint...

Ignore something today. A piece of don't-agree-with advice a predecessor or consultant offered you. A generic FYI communiqué that passes under your nose. A difficult-to-please prospect you know is tyre kicking. Make the choice to focus on something more relevant, appropriate, better able to help you achieve your goals.

The caveat - if you ignore something, you better fill the void with something you *will* apply, something you can argue offers a greater ROI for your attention. Then apply it *fully*. You just let one opportunity go... make sure it was worth it.

Deep blue musings...

When you choose to continue with something less relevant, less likely to help you achieve your goals, don't delude yourself. You're still paying an opportunity cost. The choice just feels less active. It's a chicken's way out. Brave up - actively ignore the irrelevant today!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

And if you are interested in soaking up some branding wisdom - *CEO of Earth*, S Hammond, Wiley & Sons, Sydney 2010.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Talkback radio kings

"Hello World."

John Laws from the Golden Microphone in the Fortress of Arrogance

Popular record spinners and trendy personalities on commercial radio stations come and go with the fashions of the day and the latest ratings.

But Talkback Kings tend to have tenure. John Laws took calls for over 40 years as the Godfather of Australian Talkback Radio. Alan Jones, Ray Hadley, Derryn Hinch, Leon Byner, US shockjock Howard Stern - all have massive, long-term followings. Love or loathe the personalities, they generate success by introducing something topical, then soliciting the opinions of listeners, then wrapping it up with a call to action. And if you're a first-time-caller, it's pretty exciting to give your 20c worth to a big listening audience.

I was reminded yesterday of this fundamental sales principle - ask opinion-based questions early and often of your audience. It's engaging, it pumps people's tyres up, it creates a conversation relevant to the listener, and they usually give you the answers to the test.

Much more powerful than waffling on about what's interesting to *you*.

Today's sand sprint...

Ask a client for their opinion very early in your next sales conversation. *"What do you think about...?" "How do you find" "What is your preferred"*. Keep the questions in a domain relevant to your brand of help, but let them drive the conversation. Give them a topic, an audience, and the thrill of your rapt attention... it fertilises their mental ground for what you have to say.

Deep blue musings...

Talkback Radio Hosts divide audiences. There's no issue where they sit on the fence. You agree or vehemently disagree. But you're never in doubt about where they stand. And because they take time each day to solicit input and opinions from others, they are often considered 'expert'. Have you asked enough questions of your client audience for them to consider you expert, and are you crystal clear when you share your opinion of how you might help them? Stay off the fence (you just get splinters)!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Tuna Mornay

Taking a fork to the unpalatable

As a kid, whenever I'd ask the question "*What's for tea?*" and I got a response of "*Tuna Mornay*", I'd wince. Blech. Not again. But once I sat down to eat, I always enjoyed it. For some reason (horrid repressed memory?), I had an upfront mental block that didn't match the pleasure it ultimately gave me.

Networking forums are a bit like Tuna Mornay for me. I invariably enjoy them, meet some great people, learn something, benefit from getting my name and face out there. But the thought of attending often leaves me underwhelmed. I went to one on Wednesday night - gala opening of the new Adelaide Entertainment Centre (speccy). I thought of all the other things I could have been doing, talked myself into not really wanting to go. But I did. And I had fun. And met (and re-met) great people. And learnt things. And the business will benefit.

Cold-calling, tackling the to-do list, attending the training session - the end result will invariably be worth it. It's getting over those upfront mental barriers... find your stepladder today.

Today's sand sprint...

The Tuna Mornay task awaiting you today - think back to when you'd tackled it before. How did you feel when it was done? What did you learn? How much confidence or competence or satiety did it give you? Did it help you take one step closer to a goal? Yes? Then tuck in - the reality is rarely as bad as you've convinced yourself it will be.

Deep blue musings...

Trying new sales approaches or implementing proven processes you learnt long ago are Tuna Mornay tasks. They work. And the advantage you have - most competitors aren't brave enough to take a fork to the dish. But one will. And if you want to keep up, to overtake them... start eating right now.

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

(Both my wife and Mother make great Tuna Mornay. Sensible as I am, I will never compare the two...).

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Answer the question

"To every answer, you can find a new question."

Yiddish proverb

We spend a lot of time figuring out the right questions to ask clients. But how about *your answers* to their questions?

Panha Sutta (Buddhist) Monks believe there are four ways to answer questions;

- **Categorically** - yes or no; black or white.
- **Qualified** - an analytical or opinion-based answer. *"Taking into consideration your circumstances..."*, *"Based on what you've told me / what I know..."*
- **With a counter question** - *"That's a good question - so that I'm clear / give you the most appropriate counsel, may I ask, ...?"*
- **Set it aside** - *"Let me come back to you on ... / Another way to look at it might be..."*

The Monks philosophy - wisdom is knowing when to give each type of answer.

Today's sand sprint...

If you've generated sufficient purchasing interest from a client today, they'll be asking you a question. Will you be serving their best interests by answering categorically (just the facts, Ma'am)? Does the answer need to be tailored and qualified to suit this client's unique circumstances? If you're not sure that you've got enough information to answer accurately or truthfully, can you answer with a counter-question? Finally, is their question a red herring, or one that you can't hope to answer right now? Be honest with them - set it aside, and either make it redundant or come back to it later.

Deep blue musings...

A sound sales practice for lengthy, complex or opinion-based answers is to finish them with a question - *"Does that make sense / does that answer your question?"*. Check for understanding, lest your wisdom be falling on deaf ears.

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

KFService

The eighth secret herb and spice

A client's 15-year-old daughter has just started working at KFC. In her orientation and training workbook, the chicken people have defined four 'moments of truth' where they'd like their staff members to *"positively impact the customer's experience"*;

- **Greeting** - we want you to make our customers feel welcome - be genuine, friendly and keen to help
- **Taking the order** - make it easy for people to place their order, be passionate and knowledgeable about our food
- **Delivering the order** - make people feel like they made a great choice of food
- **Thanking** - make people feel like valued customers

Pretty simple.

Will *your* customers say you ticked these four boxes for them today?

Today's sand sprint...

Be at least as good as KFC train their 15-year-old's to be. Warm, helpful, knowledgeable, reassuring and grateful. It's simple, and it's simple to overlook in busy, technically challenging days.

Deep blue musings...

With all due respect to 15-year-old's, the reason KFC (or Macca's, or any other big chain) can hand control of customer interactions to spotty faced kids... they've built great systems. Clear, defined processes that deliver a consistent result time and time again. Worth considering the next time you don't feel like using the CRM system or implementing the proven sales processes you learnt about in the training course...

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

The Pitching Coach

Suggestions from the mound.

Johnny Sain was the last person to pitch to Babe Ruth, and went on to become a revered baseball pitching coach. In his paper *A pitching coach's lessons for leaders*, Dr Gene Klann identifies the factors responsible for Sain's coaching success. 3 standouts;

1. **Suggest versus tell** - Sain never gave prescriptive orders to pitchers. Instead, he continually suggested methods that might help them improve, and repeated them over and over. When the pitcher did apply the advice, they often felt it had been their own idea. They owned it.
2. **Ongoing learning** - Sain's team members jokingly referred to him as 'Edison', because he was always studying, thinking about and experimenting with pitching styles. It gave him credibility - expert power - so that when he did offer advice, people listened.
3. **Play favourites** - Sain favored pitchers - he told everyone he thought they were more interesting, more special than other players. He respected their unique talents and cared for them. Pitchers knew it, and gave a little more for him as a result.

Today's sand sprint...

Can you avoid the temptation to tell someone how to suck eggs today? Can you plant a seed rather than a sapling? Are your clients seeing how much research and thinking and testing you are doing to improve what *you* offer them (and are you doing enough?) Finally, are your clients aware just how much you're in love with the idea of serving them - how special and brilliant you think they are? ('cause it'll be a very long year if you don't love the type of people you spend your days serving...)

Deep blue musings...

Sain's other talent - he was very observant and specific in his praise. When a pitcher had a largely forgettable day, he'd go up to them and say "*that was a great curve ball you threw in the third innings*". No smoke blowing - genuine praise and admiration, leading to engagement and positive reinforcement. Give it a go today?

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

Dr G Klann, *A Pitching Coach's Lessons for Leaders*, published in the EcSell Institute's Resource Library (www.ecsellinstitute.com)

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Will you be my client?

"If you're not serving the customer, you better be serving someone who is."

Karl Albrecht

Let's define a customer as someone who gives you what *you* want in return for you giving them something *they* want.

So who'll be your customer today?

Your partner at the breakfast table, who'll pass you the toast in return for a polite request and a thanks?

Your kids, who'll tell you what happened at school yesterday, in return for some genuine interest and attention?

The lady in the car trying to pull into your lane, who'll give you a smile and a wave, in return for your consideration in leaving a small gap?

The guy in your warehouse, who'll let you know the moment that parcel arrives, in return for you asking about their weekend and if there's any help they need from you?

Your boss, who'll cut you some slack on that late expenses report, in return for your enthusiasm and keeping them posted on your progress with that key account sale?

The prospect who said no, who'll give you some feedback and the right to come back another time, in return for you not getting sooky la la or making them feel bad?

So many sales processes... and you haven't even seen a 'customer' yet.

Today's sand sprint...

Broaden your views on who your customers are today. Replace the word 'customer' with 'anyone I interact with'. (They have the ability to improve or darken your day, right? They're customers.)

Deep blue musings...

How many customers do you know that like being ordered around by their suppliers? So why would your kids want to be bossed, your partner nagged, your boss moaned to, your warehouse guy berated, and the lady in traffic ignored?

Your choice - approach these interactions as a sales professional, or as someone blinkered to who can help them achieve their goals.

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Prepare to be judged

Stand and be counted.

For those who read the paper or have school kids, you'll be aware of NAPLAN - the standardised school testing used to create a profile of every Australian school's academic performance. The MySchool website now compares 'like' schools via a numerical rating.

A good measure or not, there is a visible, tangible way for schools to be judged.

I put my hat in the ring for a committee election this week. It's unnerving, waiting to see if anyone will vote for you. But in sales, it's what we do every day. We put our hand up to enter a contest, and prepare to be judged with a visible yardstick. An order, or not. A certain price, or not. Entry to the building, or not.

The painful bit - being judged unfit. Client says no. Chooses someone else.

The woo hoo bit - being judged favorably. I'll buy from you. Welcome to our team.

The crux - you don't get to be judged favourably if you don't put your hand up.

Today's sand sprint...

Signal your willingness to be clearly and categorically judged today. Make a call. Ask for an opportunity. Share your beliefs. State your offer of help. Step out on the ledge. You can't be judged favourably 'til you do.

Deep blue musings...

Fear of being judged harshly is the primary factor in call reluctance. No-one likes being rejected. But all sales professionals like hearing prospects say *"Let's do it!"* Only putting your hand up can get those 3 words. Hey, you're being judged anyway (they're just not telling you). And if you're not? Then they don't think *anything* of you... sales purgatory. Put your hat in the ring.

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

White space

The bit between the lines.

Glossy material publishers will tell you that most humans are capable, even comfortable, reading fairly small print.

As long as there is sufficient 'white space' between the words and the lines.

Jamitalltogetheranditgetsveryhardtointepret.

The pause between your spoken sentences is white space. The moment of mental consideration after you're asked a question is white space. The stroll to the coffee pot between writing big reports is white space. It's necessary - it helps you mentally pack, move, then unpack again.

Are you injecting white space into the right areas of your sales day?

Today's sand sprint...

Consider the pause in speech between delivering your 3 clear benefit statements to the client in front of you. The nodding mm-hmm thinking moment when they ask if you could custom-build it in pewter. The time between opening your car door as you leave one appointment and pulling away from the curb on your way to the next. The cool-down period between receiving a curt email from the boss and flicking back a (considered) response. Give yourself a little white space.

Deep blue musings...

The flipside...

Too much white space , and you (and others) will disengage, find it hard to continue or start down another path. Don't overdo it. Pause, breathe, consider, jot, then move again.

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Continually checking

You. Over there. Don't wander off. Come back. Please?

One of the things I love about volunteering with Advantage SA *Speakers in Schools* is getting face-slapping reality checks about how engaging my presentation style is.

You can hook teenagers with a couple of funny or provocative PowerPoint slides, and the odd war story will get them thinking. But if you don't actively involve them in the presentation - through questions, feedback, opinion soliciting, asking them to use their imagination - it takes no time at all for the class clown to send a wave of disruption through the ranks.

5 minutes into what was otherwise a well-received presentation to a nice Year 12 business studies class yesterday, I had one boy in the back row lay his head on the table and pretended to sleep.

Oof. My fault. He needed to be engaged... then re-engaged... then again...

Today's sand sprint...

As you prepare to launch into your sales speech that says "*Now I've learnt all about your needs, let me tell you how I'm going to help you...*", plan some checkpoints. After bullet-point one, re-engage the audience. Does it make sense? Does it fit? What do they think about that? Then, point two, same deal. Don't assume one head-nod at the start of the presentation means you'll have their rapt attention throughout your impending monologue.

Deep blue musings...

I've never had anyone fall asleep in a corporate training room workshop... at least not with their head on the desk, eyes closed. But mental checkouts? Undoubtedly happen all the time. Yesterday was a rare opportunity to get such candid real-time feedback, and reinforce a presentation principle I know to be true (but get wrapped up in my own agenda and forget sometimes). Seek some candid feedback today - check in once more with your audience.

(*Taking my own medicine* - your feedback is invaluable to this service. If there's something you like, don't like, would like to see different around these *Beach Runs*, please - email & let me know? Very much appreciated!)

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Tip the client

"We don't choose based on experiences. We choose based on memories
and anticipated memories."

Daniel Kahneman

In his presentation *The riddle of experience vs memory*, Nobel Laureate and 'the world's most influential living psychologist' Daniel Kahneman says there is a big difference between happiness and satisfaction.

He give the example of a friend who was very happily listening to a beautiful symphony, when, right at the end, there came a horrible screeching sound on the CD. *"It ruined the whole thing for me."* Kahneman says no, it didn't. It ruined his *memory* of the experience. The experience had already been had... and it was pleasurable. But when his friend reflects on it in the days, weeks, years to come, what will he remember most? The bad bit at the end. A dissatisfaction moment. And *that* will influence his future choices.

Kahneman - *"The myriad of experience moments we have - the tiny things that create happiness - are lost forever. They don't leave a trace. It is the remembering self that makes our decisions."*

So what will clients remember about dealing with you?

Today's sand sprint...

Tip your client today. End your next interaction strongly and positively - do something that will stick as a 'last-time-I-saw them' satisfied memory. Certainly, make the process of dealing with you as happy as you can - be pleasant, inquisitive, helpful, useful. But keep a question running on background loop in your head - *"What do I want them to remember most about interacting with me... and how can I ensure I leave them with that memory?"*

Deep blue musings...

Kahneman asks his audience to imagine their dream vacation. Then imagine that at the end of it, you lose all your photos and someone gives you an amnesia tonic - all memories are gone. Would you still choose the same vacation? (Starting to get heavy here...) The use of 'imagine if...' scenarios is a powerful audience engagement strategy. Imagine if you used one in your next sales conversation... what could it be?

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

See Kahneman present at www.ted.com

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Dilemma of existing client focus

"Everyone has a risk muscle. You keep it in shape by trying new things. If you don't, it atrophies. Make a point of using it at least once a day."

Roger Von Oech

We know one of the best ways to grow a business is to focus on existing clients. Sell them more of the same. Offer new products and services to trusting friends. Organic growth. Profile for doppelgangers. Generate referrals. Word of mouth. Stick-to-your-knitting tribal growth.

The dilemma - unless you're also seeking out different types of clients, problems, sales situations, fixes... you're not going to be able to add anything new to existing relationships. You can't learn extra skills or broaden your ability to help old mate if you're not diversifying your learnings or throwing yourself into unfamiliar sales waters. Sticking with what you know might refine your current help methods, but it won't expand them.

Can you serve your best clients by going off and sticking your fingers in other pies (if only so you can come back and share new recipes with them?)

Today's sand sprint...

Help a client by spending some time apart. Go learn something new - a course you've never done, a book whose topic you've never covered. Go talk to a prospect unlike any other client you deal with. Find out about their world, how they do it. Go profile a different industry - what works there, what could work in your clients world.

Then reconnect. Share your learnings. Broaden your helpfulness and value to them.

Deep blue musings...

There's a lot to be said for niche expertise. Clients like that you spend the bulk of your days invested thinking about their world, fixing their problems. And if you're not yet the guru you'd like to be, maybe it's a better ROI sharpening these specific skills. But the law of diminishing returns applies, and people value those that innovate - who bring different ideas and perspectives and experiences to bear in their quest to help. Can you do that for your best client today? Leave them alone awhile.

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

4 P's of sales

Why should marketing have all the acronyms?

Product Managers and MBA's in our breakaway group will know all about the 4 P's of marketing (Price, Product, Promotion and Placement, depending on where you went to school).

Given that sales professionals are keep-it-real marketers plying at the client coalface (-:)), why shouldn't you have your own 4 P's?

- **Philosophy** - what do you believe are gold-standard sales behaviours, how do you want to be perceived, where is your line in the sand separating intense effort and gone-too-far-for-an-order acts?
- **Practicalities** - what do you have to offer, who wants to pay enough for it, where do they live, how can you get to see them, how do they need you to present your solution and broker a deal so they can start having more fun?
- **Priorities** - what needs to happen first, where's the biggest fish, where's the lowest-hanging fruit, what's going to have the best long-term impact, what needs to go to the back of the queue?
- **Pluck** - breathe deeply, pick up the phone, turn the ignition in the car, open the door, open your smiling mouth, say hi and ask for a shot...

Today's sand sprint...

Run through the 4 P's before starting your sales day. Be clear about who you are, what you value and how you want to be known by clients. Remind yourself of what you sell, who it can help and what you're going to need to do today to generate sufficient business. Shuffle the deck and put the first things first - biggest opportunities, highest priority clients and tasks. Then, the money ball - the bit that you get paid the big \$ for 'cause no-one else has the courage to. Ask for a go.

Deep blue musings...

The sales vs marketing battleground - so much otherwise productive energy wasted. Sales and marketing = Cheech and Chong. An odd couple with more similarities than they realise. Have more fun when working together. Often get into strife. And whose synergies bring more success than solo careers. Extend a hand to your marketing brethren today - tell 'em about *your* 4 P's!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Choo choo safe

"There is a percussion to the train, a gentle rocking that allows me to sleep bug-snug in my single bed in the fashion of my childhood."

Susan Kurosawa reviewing The Orient Express

There's a reason people pay good money for business-class airfares, cruise ship holidays and luxury train travel. It has little to do with the destination, and everything to do with the journey.

My father just sent me some photos of the floods in Central Australia. Pictures of roads that descend underwater for 500m before emerging at the other side of very big puddles. Across the water, you see parallel lines of white posts indicating the road is under there somewhere, and you know about how deep it will be. But the company he works for won't let you drive through these waters, for very good reason. The next photo, where water has subsided, shows what happens to underwater roads. When you can't see them, they develop huge potholes and erode away.

You can see the destination you're trying to reach. The posts light the path. But you have no confidence that the journey will be safe, secure or enjoyable.

Are you helping clients feel secure or enjoy the journey as you walk them to the desired destination?

Today's sand sprint...

Double-check your ushering skills today. Sure, you've shown a client what you can achieve for them, and have given them the basics about what needs to happen. But how are they being inspired with a sense of confidence and security? Do they see that you've considered all possible derailers? Have contingency plans in place? Are approaching things sensibly and step-wise? Can point to a track record of safe crossings with other clients, who'd say they'd happily place their safety in your hands again? Getting them to the destination isn't enough...

Deep blue musings...

In her article about the Orient Express, Kurosawa said *"this train has no right of survival, but, despite the odds, it trundles on, delivering a sense of continuum, creaky charm, possibilities of mystery and improbable liaisons and adventure."* Continuum, charm and adventure... wouldn't you like that from a supplier? Figure out how to give your clients a first-class journey experience today!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

Excess all areas, S Kurosawa, The Weekend Australian, March 20-21 2010

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Why you're useful

Why you get paid.

The three reasons a client invests money in your products or services.

Because they **can't**.

Because they **won't**.

Because they **don't want to**.

Make the time. Do it for the price you can. Bend their knees and take on the workload. Bring the same skill set and expertise. Pay the opportunity costs. Do it justice. See precisely what needs to be done. Develop the knowledge needed. Have access to the resources. Do it without you. Be bothered. Change.

Are you clear on whether this client is using you because of some physical, mental or system limitations? Because they've swallowed a reality pill? Or because they just hate doing what they can pay you to do for them?

Today's sand sprint...

Your primary sales offering for the next client you'll see - decide which is most pertinent. If they 'can't' without you, don't lord your power or paint them into a corner. Be humble and clear and soothing as you detail the necessary steps. If they 'won't' without you, showcase the merits of engaging you and how it saves time, reduces stress and generates positives they wouldn't enjoy if they don't choose you (and these people *have* a choice). And if they 'don't want to'... show how much you do. Smile when you describe how much you enjoy cleaning septic tanks.

Deep blue musings...

In digging for objections or interpreting a prospect's stalling tactics, it's going to come down to one of these things. They mightn't be rational. They'll most certainly be to do with the individual rather than the organisation. But you need to know before you can focus on how you *can*, what you *will do*, and why you *want to*!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

The optimal shovel load

"The world is full of abundance and opportunity, but far too many people come to the fountain of life with a teaspoon instead of a steam shovel."

Ben Sweetland

Fredrick Taylor was one of the world's first management consultants - an 1800's American engineer fascinated by building more efficient business systems. Taylor famously studied men shoveling materials at the Bethlehem Steel Works in Pennsylvania, where his studies determined that the optimal load for a shovelful of any material was 21.5 lb.

Too little on the shovel, and too many shoveling actions are needed to complete the job. Too much on the shovel, and the shovel is too heavy to move quickly without fast onset of fatigue. So he designed a range of shovels suited for different materials, that would pick up precisely the optimal weight.

He was ahead of his time and hated by the unions - they sacked him. But to this day, shovel design applies his scientific method.

Is your sales shovel picking up the optimal amount each day?

Today's sand sprint...

Take a look at the tasks on your to-do list today. Prospecting. Existing client care calls. Follow-ups. Professional development. Networking. Is there enough on each shovel - are you confident that, knowing your past success ratios, you'll generate sufficient interest, activity and results in each area?

Check for overload - is one shovel a bit heavy, thereby depleting your energy and enthusiasm to tackle the other loads? It's great to go hard, but it's got to leave you with enough to tackle all the important piles.

Deep blue musings...

Taylor got poo-poo'ed for another reason - he felt workers should just work, not think. That's for managers to do. We've come a little way - businesses now rely on all their people to think and work, but his point is still worth consideration. Is it going to generate a better result for you, your business and your client, if you spend the next 10 minutes thinking, or acting?

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

Business, Dr John Lipczynski, ABC Books, Sydney, 2008.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Following the worm

The goat track of public opinion.

Three sales-specific observations about 'the worm' - the measure of public opinion used during this week's great health debate between the Aussie PM and his opposite;

- **The worm turns quickly** - it might be one word, one phrase, that captures the audience's attention and delights or horrifies them
- **The worm responds fastest to noise, not silence** - punters shift their view of you if you say something, if they know you're still in the conversation
- **The worm favours substance over rhetoric** - sound bytes are attention-grabbing, but only for so long if they're not underpinned

How's your worm tracking?

Today's sand sprint...

In today's sales conversations, keep an eye open for the phrases, questions or moments that prick your clients ears. Are you clear on what bores them and what moves them to the front of their seat? Make a note of it for future conversations. Stop sitting by the phone waiting for it to ring. Go let someone else know you're willing and able to help - let them form or shift their view of you.

Finally, back the words. If you promise them the earth, get busy digging. Worms like freshly turned soil created by a hard-working business partner.

Deep blue musings...

The Opposition Leader copped a spray for being overly aggressive in tearing into the government's health policies. It's one thing to think you do it better than the competitors, but if you're publicly savaging them (particularly if you aren't ready or willing to put forward an alternative), the buying public think you're a whiner. Play nice, be polite, and if you're going to expose holes in another's offering, have a better solution ready.

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

Who to trust?

"Trust yourself. You know more than you think you do."

Dr Benjamin Spock

Dr Karen Otazo has written a great book, *The truth about managing your career*. She talks about the importance of building - and knowing who you can - trust in your business. She mentions four types of trust that exist within organisations;

1. **Get-it-done trust** - that commitments will be met on time and budget
2. **Expertise trust** - that people know what they're talking about
3. **Political savvy trust** - that secrets will be kept and minefield-negotiating advice will be sound
4. **Structural trust** - that you are all striving to achieve the same greater good for the entire business, rather than being driven by personal agendas

Would colleagues be confident to trust you in these four areas, and do you know who you can count on in return?

Today's sand sprint...

Find one opportunity to demonstrate your trustworthiness in the four areas today. If you said you'd do something by 5pm... do it, and make sure it's known that you did. Offer your accurate technical knowledge to help a colleague or client out of a jam. Lend a workmate a confidential ear or some knowing words to handle a sensitive situation. Partner a colleague to do something you both know is in the bigger, longer term interest of your business, even if there's a smaller personal sacrifice to be made. Trust bank deposits are invaluable.

Deep blue musings...

Otazo says that every time you deal with others, there's a chance to demonstrate and test trust. Are you writing cheques your butt really can cash (and honoring those you already wrote)? Is the party opposite you breaching your or someone else's trust, even if they don't realise it? It is a fragile vase, trust. Be conscious of how you demonstrate and inspire it!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The truth about managing your career, Dr Karen Otazo, Prentice Hall, NJ 2006.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

A whole new level

"I have this desire to keep improving, so I find fault."

Heston Blumenthal

Heston Blumenthal owns English eatery *The Fat Duck*, once voted "Best Restaurant in the World" and carries 3 Michelin Stars. They call him a 'culinary alchemist'.

I saw him on TV the other night (cooking show tragic), where he was preparing a Victorian-era-inspired banquet that he wanted to be his guests "*most amazing, most enjoyable, most memorable meal ever*". He achieved it. He made an Alice-in-Wonderland drink that as you drank, changed taste from cherry pie to roast turkey to sticky toffee. He travelled to the US to figure out how to make a turtle soup in a dissolving gold leaf teabag. He built a garden with edible dirt and crispy fried tomato-injected locusts. And he made a 1m high Absinthe jelly that glowed in the dark and had, well, vibrators in it to make it wobble.

If it sounds amazing, weird, even a bit rank, consider Heston's final criteria for the meal. "It has to *taste beautiful*". There's where the real magic came in.

You might be super clever. You can offer the most technically amazing platters. But will your patrons actually **enjoy** consuming what you've put before them?

Today's sand sprint...

Decide to take out the Michelin-star equivalent in your little slice of the market this year. For technical expertise. Or most responsive service. Or proactive support initiatives offered. Figure out where you'll need to start, and commit to beginning today. **But** before you get too wrapped up in your plan for world (market) domination... will your clients actually like it? Do they want it? Will they eat it? And will they pay for it? It'll take a lot of effort to be market best... will it be appreciated?

Deep blue musings...

Blumenthal - "*I want my guests to take the trip with Alice down the rabbit hole.*" Guests, not customers. Trip, not transaction. An experience, not a process. Make it weird, wonderful, pleasurable, and make them want more. Do your clients want more from you? Where could you start?

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

Check Blumenthal out on SBS or YouTube.

Anger as a sales tool

"It is wise to direct your anger towards problems, not people."

William Ward

A Rainmaker I interviewed last week made an observation that their best-ever sale was borne out of anger (anger that it had taken them so long to make the sale!)

When I think about why I started this business, it was out of anger at the short-sightedness I perceived another organisation had. It drove me to visit a coffee shop at 7am each morning for six months and spend an hour each day on a business plan. When I know a client just isn't 'getting it', I get angry at my inability to articulate my point, so I try to come up with a better way to communicate. When I've realised that my marketing or sales efforts are falling short of competitors or the level I encourage of coachees, it (usually) sparks better planning activity, a re-adherence to disciplines I know to be vital, and renewed enthusiasm for the task.

And I get angriest at myself when I know that initiating a particular sales discipline would prove effective... and I choose to do nothing about it.

You get to choose how to apply your anger today - let it be a relationship-and confidence-corroding force, or a positive action stimulus.

Today's sand sprint...

Get angry, and let it help you sell. Be cross that clients are continually being let down by your company's late deliveries. That you fluffed the last conversation because you hadn't written details of a prior conversation in your CRM system. That next month's figures look grim because you took your eye off the prospecting ball. That a valued client is being overly demanding because you didn't train them to help themselves.

Now harness that aggro and do something about it to help your client, help your business, and in time, help you avoid this situation again.

Deep blue musings...

When you try something new and scary, and it doesn't come off, there are two angers you might keep in mind. The embarrassed one that says "*why couldn't you have just shut up, kept your head down and done it the old way?*". And the one that, had you listened to the first voice, would be saying "*now you'll never know, and that regret will last forever*". I know which anger I'm happier to reconcile.

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Zamboni serendipity

"Sometimes the most effective thinking is not thinking at all."

David Murray, Aerospace Engineer

My first time at the ice rink for my eldest's birthday last weekend, I watched the Zamboni machine roll around to smooth out the ice carved up by wobbly skaters (so many *Funniest Home Video* moments). Then yesterday, I was reading a book on innovation processes, and the author drew a parallel to the Zamboni machine. He said, once you've got the seeds of an idea planted, you need to leave them alone to *"let the surface of your mind be wiped clean, the way a Zamboni machine smoothes the ice surface between periods of an ice hockey game"*. His assertion was that this incubation period - pausing, sleeping on it - is vital to let an idea develop, rather than force it into the wrong shape.

I remember in a pharmaceutical sales role, a GP I once called on said *"I enjoy you Reps coming in here - it's a refreshing change from all the people who complain to me"*. We were his Zamboni machine.

If a client's world is as busy and confusing as yours, is there merit to helping them clear their head to enable them make smoother decisions?

Today's sand sprint...

Consider the first client you'll see this morning. Are you about to add to their confusion by overwhelming them with information and pushing them to make a tough choice? Or will you be a calm, positive Zamboni partner that gently exposes the issues, lets them vent their frustrations, smooth their mental ice, and maybe give you first dibs to put skate marks on their revitalised cranial surface?

Deep blue musings...

Maybe I overwork metaphors, but I'm a believer in serendipity. I don't think I'd seen the word Zamboni written in a couple of years, then twice in three days. If something keeps raising its head, and it's nagging at you, why not flesh it out? Then you can move on. Anything gnawing at your sales brain right now that just won't go away? Run with it... then run over it with the Zamboni!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The innovation book is called *Borrowing Brilliance*, David Murray, Penguin, Victoria, 2009 - not bad.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Three quarter time

As we round the final turn...

It's the first of April (no fooling). The lead into an Easter break and the dawn of a new Quarter. For many pedalers, the last period to affect the full-year sales result you've been busting your pooper to hit.

No sand sprint or deep blue musings today. Just a 42nd time suggestion.

Take ten minutes to think about *what went really well for you last quarter* - what simple disciplines and acts gave you the right client-delighting or sales results?

Think about where it went ugly - what traps did you fall into or shoelaces did you trip over? How will you tie them tightly for this next quarter so you don't trip again?

Then think about what needs to be done in the coming 12-weeks to get you to the full or half-year result that is the single biggest reason you are employed.

If you're interested, my top 5 coaches learnings in the past quarter;

- No-one learns if they've been dragged kicking and screaming - ya gotta want it
- First show enthusiasm, then put them at ease, *then* into nitty gritty disciplines
- If you ask someone a question, sew your stare to their eyeballs as they answer
- When you talk too much, you learn nothing other than you talk too much
- 'Telling' doesn't mean 'hearing' doesn't mean 'getting' doesn't mean 'acting'

(I don't have a boss to share and review these with, so you can be my boss today.)

Before you leave the building to go gorge on chocolate lagomorphs and yeast buns, give yourself a ten minute sales gift and 'tentpeg' - write your learnings, goals and time-stamped commitments down on paper. Then head out on a MIGHTY four day break and let the Zamboni roll through your head.

Have a **very happy Easter** - the breakaway group reconvenes next Tuesday!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

The Golfer's sales traits

"I put a lot of faith in what I call the salespersons 'makeup' - the intangible soft skills that people develop growing up via parents, teachers and friends. As in sports, they are probably better predictors of success than anything else."

Mark McCormack, Founder, IMG Sports Management

Mark McCormack was a college golfer and lawyer who, back in the day, represented a fresh faced unknown called Arnold Palmer. Today, his company IMG is the world's premier sports, entertainment and media company, representing stars like Danica Patrick, Tim Henman and the Tiger.

In his book *What you'll never learn on the Internet*, McCormack says he looks for four things from the people he hires;

1. **What's in their head?** They mightn't all be rocket scientists, but do they have enough relevant knowledge to demonstrate they can pick up what we do around here?
2. **How good are they with their hands?** Hands meaning business skills. Do they have what it takes for us to broaden their tasks and ultimately promote them?
3. **How broad are their shoulders?** The accountable and responsible. Will they tackle things others avoid? Go above and beyond?
4. **How big is their heart?** Passion, enthusiasm, bursting-at-the-seams wanting to achieve. Who'll put it on the line to achieve the desired results?

Today's sand sprint...

If a headhunter walked into your business today looking for a sales superstar, would your last 3 months worth of efforts demonstrate the head, hands, shoulders and heart competencies McCormack looks for? Are you a font of industry knowledge, expert in the multiple elements of your small business, showing you don't pass bucks and able to point to examples of putting it on the line for a client (and your employer)? Which one needs more focus in the next 3 months, and where can you start?

Deep blue musings...

One thing McCormack specifically looks for from salespeople - Time management skills. "*Are they punctual, focused and organised?*" Is your map of today's activities crystal clear, prioritised and with enough buffer built in for the inevitable distractions? Written down? Neat piles? Breathe... pick up your daily action sheet... and make sure you've planned a realistic and profitable day that uses all of your anatomy.

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

What you'll never learn on the internet, M McCormack, Harper Collins, London, 2000.

PS - Never use the word never... you learnt about *this* on the internet!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Clean your gutters

"The best time to fix the roof is when the sun is shining."

JFK

For weeks I've been watching a neighbour's tree do its Autumn party trick and shed leaves into my roof gutters. Sunshiny days rolled on, and I thought *"ahh, next weekend, plenty of time."* Then yesterday, the heavens opened with 25mm of rain and I was up a ladder at 7am frantically clearing a clogged drainpipe while Niagara Falls cascaded onto the pavers below.

I knew it was coming.

I thought I had time.

It's happened before.

You'da thought I'd learnt.

Your customers are flirting with leaving you. Your competitors are trying to steal them away. There's new players readying to enter your market. Forces are brewing that threaten your sunshine-soaked mood.

Are you clearing the gutters before you get drenched?

Today's sand sprint...

What dead foliage threatens to clog your sales pipeline in the coming 3 - 6 months? Have you been investing sufficient time nurturing relationships with your best clients - innovating and creating better ways to serve them? Have you fleshed out the real reasons for your recent sales wins, and built the 'aha!' wisdom into the coming quarter's business plan as unique action steps? Is there a networking group or new prospect subset you've been eyeing for a while thinking *"ahh, next week, plenty of time"*?

The heavens can open any moment... ready?

Deep blue musings...

On the other side of my roof is a dodgy metal elbow connecting a gutter to a downpipe. It's clear of leaves, but it's badly designed, so when the rain gets too heavy, it overflows regardless. You can keep preventative maintenance up at the right level of cadence, but if your product or system is flawed, it's futile. Is there something you've doing that feels like you're banging your head against the wall, trying to help you sell more, and it just hasn't worked? Check if the architecture is dodgy - you may need to redesign your brand of help!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Wilderness periods

"You'll get so confused that you'll start in to race...
headed, I fear, towards a most useless place.
The waiting place."

Dr Seuss, *Oh, the places you'll go!*

Former opposition leader Malcolm Turnbull announced this week he will not contest the next election and instead retire from politics. He had a shot at the title, still believes he would be a great PM, and if he were younger, might ready himself for another tilt. But as journalist Malcolm Farr described it, he is not prepared to endure the years in the political wilderness that John Howard did, waiting for another realistic chance.

Some waiting is self-inflicted - not picking up the phone to call a prospect for fear of rejection, or even the work it will create if you're successful.

Some waiting is unavoidable - the product's not ready for launch, the tech's can't get here until next Tuesday.

Both waiting places come with a choice - do something valuable with the waiting time, or sit and just wait.

Today's sand sprint...

Choose to do two un-waiting things today. For a self-inflicted waiting place you find yourself parked in, ask yourself "*what are the best and worst things that could happen if I move now?*" Pick up the phone, open the manual, start typing in the CRM system, audit your top 5 accounts, book a meeting to discuss your idea with the boss.

For an unavoidable waiting place you find yourself in, what can you do that makes great use of the time? How can you distract yourself, or the waiting client, from the waiting frustration, by servicing or polishing or innovating or training or introducing?

Deep blue musings...

More on Seuss' useless waiting place - "*people just waiting... for the mail to come, or the rain to go, or the phone to ring, or the snow to snow, or waiting around for a yes or no...*" Decide if your waiting place is a wilderness that you can bear for a longer term net gain (and get busy in the background shoring up your chances of success), or take a simple step out and stop waiting!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

Seuss, *Oh, The Places you'll go!*, Random House, NY, 1990 and M. Farr, "*Changing his own climate*", The Advertiser 7/4/2010.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Old mate

Maaaaate.

Who's your old mate?

The friend that saw you through a tough time?

The product you relied on to keep sales ticking over when the new model was a year off?

The attention to detail that helped you build a stellar reputation with your best client?

The punchy sentence delivery that helped you shine in the job interview?

The habit of reviewing your business plan for 5 minutes each morning?

The trade show that never generated on-the-spot coin, but triggered many flow-on sales?

The personal values you've fallen back on time and time again to make a tough decision?

The natural ability to spot and say no to cul-de-sac opportunities?

The smile you know triggers an automatic warmth in whoever's speaking to you?

Have you ever dropped old mate when a new, exciting friend turned up at the door?

They got you this far. Are you sure you want to let the relationship slide?

Today's sand sprint...

Something new and exciting recently presented itself in your sales world - a client, an opportunity, a product, a technique, a habit. It's kinda sexy, and you want to give it a shot. But before you dump an old chum like a hot potato to make room for the new pal, ask yourself *"If it got me this far, am I sure I don't need it anymore? And if I lose this old mate, what might be the longer term consequences?"* Good mates are hard to find and old mates are rare treasures - don't make the call too lightly.

Deep blue musings...

Every mateship's bound to have rocky patches. You can bail out in the middle of a dip - crystallise your losses - or think longer term about your return on investment. If the qualities you first saw in old mate are still there (even if they aren't generating the immediate results you want), is it worth persisting? Cut an old mate some slack - they've sure helped you!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

A mighty thank you to all my old mates - I'd be lost and on a lonely journey without them!

Drucker Wisdom

"Accept the fact that we have to treat almost everyone as a volunteer."

Peter Drucker

Peter Drucker is the late management theory pioneer who coined terms like "Management by Objective" and "Knowledge workers". He had a sometimes contrarian view about how business should be run, but has been universally recognised as a leader's leader who saw farther, faster than most anyone else.

Drucker had simple beliefs on how to generate results in a market;

- Economic results go first to market leaders
- Leadership doesn't last, so innovate
- To get the best economic results - concentrate

In other words, strive be the very best at what you do in a small focused domain, and don't be complacent 'cause change is coming.

Today's sand sprint...

Finish this sentence - *"To the client group I want to generate more revenue from, I am / my offering is the clear market leader in*". Marvelous. Do all the clients know it? Do they care? Are they prepared to pay for it? What can you do that is market best and that they will pay for?

Then Part B - *"That leadership advantage won't last - someone is copying it right now. So the next thing I can start planning to be a market leader in is....."*

Deep blue musings...

Drucker's 3 comments about innovation. Don't try to be clever (your fallible human clients need to quickly get it). Don't diversify, splinter or try too many things at once. And don't try to innovate for the future - innovate for now. Can you innovate to take advantage of an opportunity you can see in your market today, and keep it simple? Get a bit Drucker and make it a conversation topic at your next team meeting!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

Peter Drucker by Robert Heller, DK Books, London, 2000.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Harnessing envy

"There comes a time in every mans education when he arrives at the conviction that envy is ignorance, imitation is suicide and he must take himself for better or worse."

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Do you ever get that green feeling? The Jones' you've been trying to keep up with that have more money than you. Bigger house, nicer car, more friends, social status, peace of mind, security, better sales results, faster career trajectory?

If you're ever able to fully abandon the sense of envy that comes when you see someone with the things you've been striving for, please let me know how. Until then, maybe;

- Decide to learn from them
- Appreciate the sacrifices they've had to make (that you aren't prepared to)
- Decide precisely how you are unique, different, talented in a way they aren't
- Morph your envy into a forehead slap (for not yet having used your talents more to achieve *your* goals)
- Let the sting prompt an action step (that you diarise, plan and move on)
- Remember how bl**dy lucky you are, how envied *your* life is (so don't waste it)

Today's sand sprint...

Write down the name of someone you envy. Go through the above steps. Then let it go.

Deep blue musings...

This Beach Run was provoked by an old friend I recently caught up with who is kicking some goals. I owe it to him not to envy him - it's poisonous and not conducive to friendship. And there's a lot of sacrifice he's had to make that I don't envy, nor would I pay the same price to get his trinkets. The positive is that he's inspired me to get a bit cleverer, more focused, do things a little better, to get the results I want. Let the envy of your eye be a trigger to spruce up your efforts today!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Dealing with the poppy cutters

"We don't like their sound, and guitar music is on the way out."

Music executive rejecting The Beatles in 1962

Mike Harris has started several billion-pound businesses and now consults to IBM, Intel and Adobe. His book *Find your lightbulb* offers advice on growing business out of simple ideas. One area he touches on is dealing with the inevitable detractors that come with any new way of doing things. His advice for dealing with so-called experts poo-pooing your idea:

1. If they dismiss you or your idea out of hand... ignore them.
2. If they carefully consider your idea before telling you it won't work... ask them exactly why and with as much detail as possible.
3. Keep searching for critics who will carefully consider your idea and help you build a long list of 'why not' reasons
4. Use these intelligent insights as input into your design

Today's sand sprint...

The next time a prospective client tells you that your product or service or support concept just won't work for them, dig deeper. Ask why, and if they'll give you as much detail as possible. If you think their points have merit, see if there are others that share this perspective - is there truly a design flaw, or is it that you are targeting the wrong type of people who might love and pay for your imperfect offering?

If you can, build their insights into Mark 2. If you can't, thank them, and relook at who these flaws will be less relevant to.

Deep blue musings...

I like point 1 - some people are just poppy cutters. If they're not willing to look more closely before slamming your widget, or give you some reasons for ragging on your service, then go find someone else who'll either take it up, or at very least help you hone your future business plan!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

M Harris, *Find your lightbulb*, Capstone, UK, 2008.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Five one-minuters

"60 seconds on the clock - your time starts NOW."

Tony Barber and a string of pretenders

Five one-minuters you can do today - 60 second tasks that might generate exponential rewards;

1. Write a thank-you, hope-the-purchase-is-going-famously, speak-soon note on a With Compliments slip and post it to a recent client.
2. Pick up a product or service brochure - one you know well - and identify one new client who would be perfect for one particular benefit on there... then make a note in your diary to call and book an appointment with them.
3. Google your product category or market segment keywords, see who ranks higher than you, visit their site, and decide on one thing you can learn / copy from them.
4. Think about the biggest KPI your boss has, and decide on one thing you can do today that positively contributes to them achieving it.
5. Go to your 'Sent items' box, scroll back to 30 days ago, and look at the commitments you made that week. All done? Better late than never...

Today's sand sprint...

Invest 5 minutes in 5 exercises that are easy to not do. Two scenarios - your competitors aren't doing these things, so you just snuck in front. Or they are, and you just made the grade... (so now more effort required).

Deep blue musings...

I doubt your boss will hand you a \$20K cheque today to build the new sales initiative you've been craving for years. So it's going to come down to simple things. Disciplines. Activity. Follow-through's. Thinking. Planning. Doing. And it just takes 60 seconds...

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Side effects

"There are 3 side effects of acid. Enhanced long-term memory. Decreased short-term memory. And I forgot the third."

Timothy Leary

A medication I once promoted to treat epileptic seizure activity had an interesting side-effect - it decreased headaches in seizure patients. So the company took this side effect and got the TGA to endorse the drug's use to treat anyone with headaches.

The current Aussie PM set out to make his government one of the hardest working ever. The side effect reported in yesterday's paper - they have the highest rate of staff burnout, nearly ten times the national company average.

A dry cleaner I use advertises "3 garments for \$15" on presentation of a shopper docket. The side effect this promotion has created in their staff - resentment towards people who only visit them for this reason, and they try to find a reason why your 3 garments don't qualify for the deal ("*grumble sassafras cheapskates grumble*").

Your product, service, even the way you approach a client, comes with side-effects. Are you monitoring your side effect profile to make the most of pluses and work around minuses?

Today's sand sprint...

Identify one positive side-effect of buying from you. Take a look at your last ten happy clients, and review exactly what they've been happy about beyond the promised benefits. Fill in the customer feedback blanks - "*Since buying this, not only did we achieve what we wanted, but also,*"

Now the flipside - what nausea or headaches does your solution have potential to create? Does it cause friction? Put people out of jobs? Create unmanageable expectations? Decide one way you might lessen the impact or avert the side effect completely.

Deep blue musings...

In medicine, side effects are managed through dose adjustments. Too much of a good thing - side effect. Too little - no therapeutic effect. Somewhere in the middle is a rate of delivery that will do the job and be well tolerated. Is your level of customer contact and support right? Check the dose today.

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Junk mail lessons

Safe. Fast. Affordable. Buy now!

Letterbox leaflet legends Harvey Norman just delivered their latest interest-free-filled glossy. Normally destined for the round file without a second glance, I've taken one for the team and read to consider how they try engaging and inspiring action in masses. 3 observations;

- **Be bold, bright and happy** - colourful pictures, smiling customers... we need your attention before you'll be interested, loooong before you'll read fine print.
- **Sticking to the three all-powerful memes** - there's only 3 reasons we buy. Time. Money. Peace of mind. HN's banner line - "Best brands! (read "proven, peace of mind".) Best advice! (read "save time".) Best prices! (guaranteed!)"
- **Clear next steps** - Big phone number (1300 GO HARVEY), store locations and phone numbers, open 7 days, website... if you want to take advantage, it's not hard to establish how.

(Now it can go into recycling...wait, I like the look of those photobooks...)

Today's sand sprint...

Let proven-effective junk mail instruct your sales approach today. Check your affect. Are you smiling, chirpy, happy, and presenting your offering to clients with enthusiasm and joy? Think very clearly about the 3 key benefits of partnering with you that are most relevant for this client, and plan to verbally tie them back to the key purchasing drivers. Save them time. Give them an amazing ROI. And let them sleep soundly.

Finally, make it really, really easy to step into the partnership. Have the forms ready, offer to do the paperwork, ask the question, and if they say "*I want to!*", make sure you can say "*Then let's go right now!*"

Deep blue musings...

This catalogue... it wasn't called a catalogue or sales brochure. It was called the "2010 Buyers Guide". I don't want to be sold to, but I know I am a buyer. They named their catalogue after me! How flattering! It's like being in a team, a loyalty club, a super-users group, an advisory panel, a peloton, a partnership program, a tribe of 42 businesses.... :-) Are you pushing sales guff, or supporting prospective buyers in making good choices?

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

(I'm not sure how to reference a piece of junk mail, but I think they'll forgive me for the plug...)

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

The Emperor's new clothes

"Look - the Emperor is naked!"

The little boy

You know Hans Christian Andersen's story about the vain Emperor, tricked by two scoundrels into believing he was wearing a cloak so fine it could only be seen by the most discerning eyes... then being called out by a child for the blind (nude) fool he'd been.

Are you ever guilty of wearing the Emperor's clothes?

Thinking sales will grow because the market is turning around and your product is great and your colleagues tell you what a great schmoozer you are (while ignoring the disciplines and structures and lessons you learnt about what wins business)? Believing a happy customer will tell others about how wonderful it is to be a client of yours without being asked or encouraged or incentivised? Relying on one big deal to come through (of course it will) to get you over the line, so not investing much in shoring up all the smaller plan B's? Assuming clients mentally translate your slick feature and benefit statements into pain-soothing applications specific to them?

Don't be exposed as a naked sales fool this year.

Today's sand sprint...

Put the hubris and ego aside for a moment and stand starkers in the sales dressing room. Are you really doing all you need to do, all that's been proven to work, to secure your sales number and achieve your goals this year? (*"But I'm beautiful! They love me!"*) Are you really willing to bet your year's result on that vanity, or is there room for you to review and re-implement the disciplines and processes and elbow grease that got you here?

Deep blue musings...

Perhaps worse than wearing the Emperors clothes - letting others wear them. The client you know is heading for a fall (but to keep the conversations nice, you haven't told them). The partner oblivious to a market shift that you're aware of (but because you're busy or it's not in your job description, you haven't given them a heads up). When the Emperor realises they are naked (then covers up), they'll remember those that let them stroll along in blissful ignorance... *"off with their heads!"*

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

Andersen, H. C., *Fairy Tales told for children* (First Edition), Denmark, 1837.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Remembering

"We all have our time machines. Some take us back - they're called memories.
Some take us forward - they're called dreams."

Jeremy Irons

Do you remember the client you saw at 10am last Thursday morning? The specific reason they granted you some of their precious time? Their partners name?

The CSIRO is preparing a research paper called *Our Future World* that identifies five so-called megatrends they believe will shape our society. I haven't read the real deal, but looking through a preliminary review, one theme that jumped out was 'information overload' and the need for new technologies to help people combat it. IBM suggest memory tools will be one of the fastest growing technologies in the next 5 years. Guides, consultants and trusted advisors grow like sour sobs in every marketplace. The tweet river flows ever faster. Google whatever you like - there'll be hundreds of thousands of entries.

So, add up the bits. Lots of information. Customer desire for more personalised approach. Headspace at a premium. Are you writing down your client's partner's name?

Today's sand sprint...

Sales Alzheimers is a manageable disease. If you thought it important enough to ask the question, and the client generously answered it, tentpeg in the 2 minutes post-meeting. Make a written record of it. A note in your CRM. In the diary alongside the next appointment time. Reference it in your email back to the client as you thank them for their time ("*all my best to Hermione!*"), then save it in an email archive with the clients name that you review to plan your next meeting.

Deep blue musings...

Something that reading this Top 5 article triggered me to do - google "*Top 5 trends in (lots of things)*". Libraries of ideas, research, opinions flashed before my eyes. While I haven't got hours to surf the net for random inspiration, it was a great reminder of just how simple tipping yourself into some very clever thinking can be. Take 5 minutes and find a top 5 that might help you help your busy clients today!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

Getting ahead of the 'megatrends', Alan Kohler, 19/4/10, eureka-report.com.au, via my generous map making friend John - thank you!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Running the Power

"We concede that there can be honour in defeat, but honourable defeat of our club and gurnsey can come only after human endeavor on the playing field is completely exhausted."

Fos Williams, 1962, The PAFC Creed

I was fortunate to hear Port Power Football Club CEO Mark Haysman speak yesterday with a small group of businesspeople. Having transitioned from running a brewery to heading an elite sporting club (not without its challenges), Mark generously shared candid perspectives on what it takes (and will take) to be successful. 3 that stuck out;

- **Nurture the heartland, seek new support creatively** - Port has a nucleus of dyed-in-wool local supporters who need to be actively engaged to stay part of the fold, but there are also new supporter markets that, with a little focus and strategy, can bolster the ranks... and they need creative attention.
- **Make hard calls based on your values** - when you're clear about what you stand for, your personal 'creed', you have something to guide decisions that may appear quick fixes (but deep down, you know just aren't right).
- **Supporters all want different things** - to some of their paying brigade, the remarkable history of the club is an anchor. To many Gen Y's, they don't care how long the club's been around (they just want 'em to win). Understand your market segments.

Today's sand sprint...

Do something that gives your heartland a reminder of why they treasure your partnership - book in a relationship maintenance and progression call with a treasured client. Then think about who else might benefit from your saleable offering, considering unlikely places... who's dissatisfied, who's not being targeted, who needs a good plan B club?

Consider your personal creed. What will you do, and what won't you do, for a sale? Finally, remember to tailor. The client who you're about to call - how can you personalise it to them?

Deep blue musings...

Not wishing to embarrass, Mark also politely said "*It's important to have a no d*ckhead policy.*" Everyone wants more members and revenue, but there are some supporters / players / leaders you just don't want associated with your brand, that you can't help, that erode your values. I'll let Crows supporters argue whether Port walks that talk, but in your business, when your d*ckhead radar starts pinging during a prospective partnership meeting, listen to it.

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

A big thank you to Mark, MyATM and The Quarter Club for this generosity. And I'm a Carlton man...

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Punchy sales prods

These 3 words...

Stevie Wonder

Make today count.

Delete the extraneous.

Trim. Focus. Move.

Today's sand sprint...

Define today's goal.

Document simple steps.

Execute the plan.

Deep blue musings...

Floral is nice.

Doesn't always resonate.

Crisp... clear... pow!

MIGHTY selling today!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Diggers, elephants and acid rain

"And at the going down of the sun, and in the morning,
we will remember them."

From *For the fallen*, Laurence Binyon, 1914

Watching the Anzac Day Parade yesterday, it was easy to swell with gratitude and respect for those who acted long ago to afford us everything we have today.

The Melbourne Storm Kahuna's forgot the long-term law of cause and effect. As they grapple with the enormity of a cheaters punishment, the acid rain from years of dodgy hidden deeds threatens to dissolve not just the future of their club, but maybe that of rival code club St Kilda.

Which brings me to elephants. Long memories. Your acts today will have long-term ramifications for your future results, reputation and self-worth. They can be acidic and create negative fallout for others around you. They can be noble and heroic like the Diggers. Some you'll want forgotten, others you hope will be copied and repeated and revered. The only surety - *someone* will remember what you did.

(Even if it's only you.)

Today's sand sprint...

Project your head 20 years ahead. How old will you be? Your kids, your partner? Where do you want to be? Who do you want to still be in touch with? Who do you want to have helped? What sort of person do you want to be known as? How do you want to see *yourself*?

Now consider the activities you're planning this week. The little things. The time investments. The tone of conversations. The proactive versus reactive. The kneejerk sprays and the measured applying of learned wisdom. The respectful and the candid.

Are they acts that are consistent with where and who you want to be? Consider.

Deep blue musings...

To the few reading on this public holiday, I hope today's *Beach Run* gets you thinking about the sands of Gallipoli and Afghanistan, or the mud of Vietnam and Sandakan (where my Grandfather served). To imagine what others had to give to let you have the opportunities that sit in your lap today. Then respect it by deciding to do something remarkable in 2010.

Have a **MIGHTY** ANZAC day holiday! (Come in spinner...)

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Diversifying relationships

You can't have too many friends.

From a previous client phone-around last week, I discovered that a couple of people who had been my primary contacts within these businesses had recently moved on. Doh. I had a good relationship with them. They championed my services within their business. Even in accounts where other people knew me and thought what I did for them was useful, I no longer had that one person who was my star 'internal sales rep'. Start again.

It's why we have managed funds. Insurance policies. Backup generators. Torches in the cupboard. A spare key at the neighbour's house. At some point, your number one supporter may leave.

Have you built strong relationships with more than one bod in your client accounts? Inside *your* business?

Today's sand sprint...

Your best client's account - are all your eggs in one relationship basket? Can you start building a friendship, some understanding and support from one of their colleagues? Make a plan to call them and take your relationship to the next step this week.

Within your business... what if your boss leaves tomorrow? Are you tight with the person most likely to replace them? Is there someone you've ignored because your business doesn't require you to have much to do with them? Consider calling them or crossing the cubicle farm to ask if there's anything you can do to help them. If no-one's told you yet, there's a restructure of your business just around the corner... you may need this person, and they may need you.

Deep blue musings...

The upside of VIP clients leaving is you now get to try and inspire their replacement to become an *even greater* supporter of your efforts. That's gonna need a plan...

Maybe even better... one client account potentially becomes two. Call your recently departed client and congratulate them on their move - never know where your continued relationship nurturing might take you both!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

The rate-limiting step

I'm going as fast as I can!

Risking some wrath, I sometimes affectionately refer to my significant other as 'the rate-limiting step'. When our little team gets ready to go out to a BBQ, I know that no matter how fast I gladwrap the potato salad, get the drinks packed, make sure the kids have their stuff together and lock up, we're not getting out of the house any faster than my dear wife can get herself ready (the end result is always worth it though... owww).

Every complex activity has a rate limiting step. One that more than others, determines how fast or slow you achieve your desired endpoint. You can ignore it, curse it, try to beat it, but no matter how fast you get the groceries into your trolley at the supermarket, you're only getting out as quickly as the person on the scanner decides they'll move.

Do you know the rate-limiting step in your next sales process, and are you planning for it?

Today's sand sprint...

Consider the prospective client you're preparing to approach - what's likely to be the step that most determines how quickly or slowly this will move? Is it how fast you can get an appointment with them? How quickly they can get sign-off from their boss? How speedily you can get back to them with the answers to their questions? The pace that marketing can get you the prototype to show them? When the tender that's in place expires? If you know what it is, can you start positively impacting it today? Prioritise the rate-limiting step as activity #1, and make sure it can go as smoothly as possible.

Deep blue musings...

Picked this up watching *Masterchef* - a cook under time pressure will always look for the slowest part of the recipe (boiling the lobster, baking the cake), and get it going ASAP. Then they can work on the less time-consuming bits while they wait. Which is why I volunteer to do the potato salad, getting kids ready,OWWW!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

The car race man

"They may forget what you said, but they will never forget how you made them feel."

Carl Buechner

Two great boardroom talks in as many weeks, I heard Clipsal 500 car race CEO Jason Allen speak to a group of about 15 people yesterday. In sharing his career progression and lessons-learnt story, three things stood out listening to this under-40 leader;

- **What he said** - his points were made clearly, he kept it real, he highlighted mistakes he'd made, lessons learnt, gratitude to mentors and simple tips.
- **How he said it** - Jason's presentation combined humility and an admission that he's still on a steep learning curve, with a confidence and self-assuredness in his beliefs that didn't come out arrogantly.
- **What he wrote** - as the audience went around the room introducing themselves, Jason wrote down names and key points so he could refer back to them in his talk... very engaging and tailored to the audience.

Today's sand sprint...

In today's chats with clients and colleagues, be clear. Be you. Don't dress it up in corporate speak. Don't swear or drop your g's, but don't pretend either. Give credit where it's due, and admit your knowledge gaps. Then - don't be afraid to share your opinions with passion, and that while you don't know it all, you *are* sure of one thing - what you believe in.

Finally... write things down. It's not rude. It's not distracting. It's smart. It helps you finish the conversation *the right way*.

Deep blue musings...

One of Jason's take-homes - you'll hear the word no far more times than the word yes. Ignore it. Plough on. Significantly more people said no to him including the Skyshow in this year's Clipsal program than said yes. They did it anyway, and it was (in their opinion) a huge success (great spectacle). Let yourself be defined by the negative, or let the affirmatives boost your resolve.

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

Thanks to Jason and the generous hosts, Penfolds at Magill Estate.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Altered mechanics, constant mission

"Gentlemen, we can rebuild him. We have the technology. Better than he was before. Better. Stronger. Faster."

The Six Million Dollar Man

Come July 1st, the sales help vehicle you know as 42 **MIGHTY** Sales Reps will close.

Being built in its place, a new, better consultancy. **42 MIGHTY Businesses.**

More flexible. More adaptable. More focused on generating mighty ROI's and outcomes for clients, than chasing new business to sell pre-packaged programs and workshops.

Gotta say, I'm a bit toey about it. To morph your baby into a tween comes with butterflies. And we need a quorum to make it work. But it's necessary evolution (baby).

Some things will change. What you'll overtly pay for. How you'll pay for it. The scope of services and benchmark level of tailoring you can benefit from. New mechanics.

But some things will stay the same. The values and commitment I stake my livelihood on. The myopic focus on building and retaining your valued clientele (internal and external). And a burning desire to help you in diverse, creative and engaging ways. The same mission.

A business named after, and dedicated solely to helping, its mighty customers.

Today's sand sprint...

Take a moment to think about your mechanics and your mission. Is the way you're contacting and holding discussions with your (prospective) customers as effective as it was 3 years ago... 3 months ago? Are the words you're using stale or fruity fresh? Are they still front-of-chair excited about what you're bringing to the party? Assuming the heavies aren't restructuring your sales role today, how could you reinvent, refresh, revolutionise your client-focused efforts?

The critical double-check - are these new client recruiting and delighting ideas still consistent with your mission? Can punters still see that it's you under that makeup? Is the reputation and reassurance you bring to a relationship still relevant... or are they having to buy a whole new concept?

Deep blue musings...

Some of you loyal *Beach Runners* I'm already speaking to about being part of the 'Foundation 25' - the first 25 businesses to enjoy 12-months of this concierge-style service. For others, if you'd like to know more, please sing out! I believe in Jack Welch's philosophy - "*Change... before you have to.*" The old school sales training vehicles are now in the museum. Visit them there, or give me a call to explore what I believe to be the future of creating sustainable and profitable client partnerships.

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day! Next week, we enter the final 42 Beach Runs... get ready for the lactic acid burn!

Caravan Park selling

"How's the serenity?"

Bonnydoon's tourism champion

Stuck in traffic heading home from a weekend in the beautiful Clare Valley, I thought about why we were so drawn to (and satisfied by) the Caravan Park we stayed in.

First, it's always **full**. Other people trust them - that's inspiring. Next, they had all the **functionality** we needed - cabins, BBQ's, campfires, playground. Then the intangibles - the **feel** of the place. Cabins not too jammed together, sprawling lawns with big gum trees full of cackling kookaburra's, a fauna park with kangaroo's the kids could pat, cabin verandahs to sit on and enjoy the local produce... feel stress melt away.

Then the icing - **friendliness**. The new park managers (caretakers, who could easily just go through the motions) went out of their way to help us. They charged well, but then did more than we'd have expected. And as we sat around the campfire, the husband and wife team walked around the park together and said hello to everyone, asking if people were having a great trip. **Refreshing**.

Today's sand sprint...

Do prospective clients see how full you are? Have you given them case studies, or full showrooms, or client testimonials to show they aren't the only ones making the choice to buy from you? Can they see that you actually have what they want to fix their problems and achieve their goals?

These same people - are you creating conditions or showcasing bits that make it easy for them to fall in love with you? (Yep, love.) And the very least you can do... smile, walk around and say hi.

Deep blue musings...

The flipside to a weekend away - impending Monday-itis. Even when you love what you do and who you do it for, it's still catchable. My home remedy - use the trip home to mentally map out key priorities for the next week, and as soon as you're home, tentpeg by writing Monday's checklist. Then give yourself the rest of the night to plan your next trip away.... Flinder's Ranges?

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Birthday countdown

The power of 42.

42 months ago today, 42 MIGHTY Sales Reps was registered with the Office of Consumer & Business Affairs. This (un)birthday also kickstarts a countdown - there are just 42 *Beach Runs* remaining to July 1st and the end of your current subscription. The moons are aligned.

To practice the medicine I offer up from this early morning sales soapbox, I've reviewed the biggest lessons I've taken from coaching over 120 clever sales professionals and managers in the last 3.5 years. My top 3;

1. **Be a Bilby.** Bilby's have big ears and small mouths. So should coaches. So should sales professionals. How well you engage someone, how well you understand them and their goals and their situation, and how willing they are to take 20c worth from you, starts with letting them have their say, and you letting it in.
2. **We all wear different coloured sunnies.** My view of the world and how to exist comfortably and succeed within it is shaded differently to yours. The faster I can lend your glasses to see your view, the faster I can adjust my approach. But where I'm guaranteed to fail? Telling you to wear my sunnies first.
3. **It's Groundhog day.** Every morning, Sonny & Cher singing "*I got you babe*". Repetition is powerful. You pick up something different every time. It takes multiple listens to really hear the words, to get the message, to be inspired to act. If I ask once or tell just once... limited response. If we cover old ground over and over... as long as it's the right ground, we get the right result. Broken records stick in your head.

Today's sand sprint...

Plan to be a Bilby. Plan 3 great questions to ask your next client, then shh and listen.

Take off your sunnies. Just because you think the client would benefit from installing twelve X7000's in their plant room... do you know why they're scared of that? Put your worldview to one side and try see things from the clients side.

Then do it again. Ask again. Say again. Write again. Call again. Plan again. Over and over and.... (*"They say we're young and we don't know...."*).

Deep blue musings...

One other 'ding' moment I've had (little lightbulb above head) - you can use 42 sentences in your conversation, hoping the other party will utilise and benefit from all of them. But maybe they only remember one... and it mightn't be the one you most wanted them to. You don't get to choose which card a client takes from your deck - you can only hold them out. But you better make sure that each card passes your values test and are useful in some way.

Have a MIGHTY sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Tangible wins

Things you can put a finger on.

So your client bought your widget or service or time or membership.

Did they get what they paid for? Really? The problem they needed solved and the flow-on tangible benefits that they wanted from not having the problem anymore? Did they achieve the goals they had before investing with you - things they can point to in a ledger or words they've heard others use about them as a result? Can they clearly make the translation - *"I invested X hours and Y dollars with Troy, and I can categorically state I've achieved this, fixed that, built my skills by this and my reputation by that - all as a direct result of my investment. It's been an economically robust investment."*

You are after all a wonderful relationship manager, and they don't regret buying.

But did you give them a tangible win?

Today's sand sprint...

What economic measure does your client most need to assess the value of their investment with you? Is it cash - has their investment made them definitively more money? Is it skills - can they now clearly do more than they could before (and what are the benefits of that?) Is it reputation - have you markedly elevated their standing (and how is that really helping them?) Is it time - have they got 2 hours free to use in other return-generating ways? Is it peace-of-mind - are they now getting 2 hours more sleep at night not worrying?

What's the measure, and is the sale you made to a client last week measuring up?

Deep blue musings...

If you've gotten this far across the sand, review the \$90 and bucketload of time you've invested reading these morning thought-provokers. Modestly, you've found they're sometimes interesting, sometimes funny, sometimes pointed reminders that resonate with you. But can you point to a tangible win you've had as a result of investing in them? The ultimate measure of their worth. I'd love you to email me and tell me (heck, I'd love examples!). If you haven't, I'd be eternally grateful for your courageous decision to tell me so too. The hurt feelings from honest feedback pale when compared to the blind pursuit of something punters don't value!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Your contribution

"I try to give my best anytime I write anything - I think that is my contribution."

Elena Kats-Chernin

Helping my eldest research for a project on inspirational Australians, we found a book called "A Fair Go" about migrants who've made good and been significant contributors to this country.

Featured is Russian-born orchestral composer Elena Kats-Chernin, who has spent decades contributing to Australia's classical music offering. Her work is performed by the Juilliard Ensemble and you'll find her in most ABC music shops.

What resonated was a quote she made. *"My contribution to Australia is my music - that if I write good enough music, and I try my best anytime I write anything - then that is my contribution. I do give lectures sometimes, but I don't think that's as good. I do like to talk to students, but that's a very small contribution. It's my music".*

We can talk about it. We can spread our focus and efforts thinly. Or we can jump boots'n'all into doing the things we know we do better than anyone else. *That's* our most valuable contribution.

Today's sand sprint...

What do you do that is most valued by your clients? The thing you're quietly proud of leading your competitive pack in? Is it building rock-solid rapport through on-your-feet problem solving and follow-up? Knowing more than the others? Working harder, later, earlier? Being calmer in the face of bluster? Delivering clever and high calibre work that can't easily be matched? Do it today. Give as many people you can the benefit of your most valuable contribution.

Deep blue musings...

From the same book, a comment from Jim Trambas, a Greek who emigrated with nothing and built a highly successful engineering business in Tasmania that constructed the roof for the Athens Olympic stadium - *"When I get older, I don't want to have to turn my head back and say 'did I do enough?'"*.

Consider your contribution today to your colleagues, your clients, your organisation, and to your own success.

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

A Fair Go - Portraits of the Australian Dream, W McCarthy AO, Focus Publishing, NSW, 1999.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Big

"I want to be... BIG!"

Tom Hanks, not happy with his lot

How are you being big?

You mightn't have a big warehouse of products to display like Bunnings.

But you can hand-tailor a piece of sales literature with pictures and your clients logo to make it feel like their own personal virtual showroom that you take them through over a coffee.

You mightn't have a big advertising budget like Telstra.

But you can blog and tweet and write e-newsletters and sponsor the local bowls club and encourage loyal supporters to spread the word to the most relevant few.

You mightn't offer big discounts like Dan Murphy's.

But you can work with the 81% of the market to whom price isn't everything and offer artisan-level service and support and training and partnership value-adds.

You mightn't have a big fleet of sales mignons like Coke.

But you can spend your time with the highest potential, most loyal or most profitable clients more frequently and with more personal service than The Real Thing Army.

You mightn't even have a big following like Virgin or Justin Bieber.

But you can invest all your energies to try and get a tribe of 25 saying your efforts are the most valuable they've ever had from a supplier... stick around.

You mightn't be big. But you can have a **big** impact.

Today's sand sprint...

Take the big thing you've been jealous of a competitor possessing, and flip it on its head. How is your smaller, more nimble, more personalised, more flexible, more creative structure able to do things that big process-driven institutions cannot? Can you move faster where the big guy's structures won't allow? Can you hand-write 20 thank-you cards where their system generates 10,000 form letters? Can you create 10-person client focus groups over a curry and beer where they employ a team of market researchers to poll 10,000 people? Don't use scale as an excuse... you have an advantage.

Deep blue musings...

As a one-man band, client partnership opportunities present that are beyond my scale; multi-national standardised classroom sales training programs, while I'd love the cash, are not by bag I'm afraid. But the clients who need something a little more local, more bespoke, customised to their idiosyncrasies and unique situations and quirky team members that a Dale Carnegie cannot? I'm there with bells on (and committed to delighting). And there is no-one bigger at 5:30am email prods.... be big! (I hope this isn't coming across as too Freudian...).

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Daydream believers

"There is no way in the world any of the guys who beat me would think I could do what I have done. I kept persisting."

Neil Robertson, Snooker gun

If you doubt the power of dreams, take a quick look at Neil Robertson. Penniless school dropout who pursued what he loved and borrowed a waistcoat from a competitor to enter an event that this week netted him over \$400K in prizemoney for potting a few balls.

Not convinced? Jessica Watson. Too young. Irresponsible parents. False start. About to rack up a complete circle of this big round wet ball of ours in a pink bathtub because she had a burning desire. Bigger, scarier, further from reach dreams that you or I will ever have. 16 years old.

My better half turned a significant age last week. Was determined to not let it get her down. Instead of letting it slide by with a depressed whimper, turned it into a 10-day Olympic event, culminating in a French bubble soaked Mothers Day closing ceremony with 20 family members. Achieved a goal - get happy with a new age bracket.

Float through your days as an instant-gratification hang-the-future-ist or a go-with-the-flow directionless zombie.

Or get crystal clear and gear your efforts to achieving something that'll make the hairs on the back of your neck stand up.

Today's sand sprint...

Set a crystal clear 2010 goal. Set 3. You'll achieve them before year's end. Because *you* get to decide if you can do it. And you're better than others.

Deep blue musings...

I've set myself a very clear goal - I want 25 businesses to commit to 42 hours of my consultation services before June 1st. Not there yet - 16 in-principles committed. BI**dy scared I won't make it. But damned if I won't give all I have to try and get a service that'll benefit so many up and breathing. I think that's what goals do - give you a 240V sting that stirs you into planning, acting and continually pedaling to achieve the thing that burns in your frontal cortex. Do yourself a favour... set one.

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

List and twist

What if you had an extra \$1M for marketing?

What would you do if you had *nothing*?

Running a workshop with a client yesterday to explore new ways they can engage and support their sales team, we prepared* to 'List and Twist'.

Listing and twisting involves considering a support initiative, then turning it on its head and considering precisely the opposite. Consider making a client event bigger, or maybe smaller. Take a process you follow and add a step, or maybe remove a step. A service you deliver- make it easier, or more complex, or higher quality, or lower quality. Speed something up, or slow it down. Standardise or customise. Make it fun or make it educational. Hand craft and deliver to the door, or make it a self-serve buffet.

Think about something you're doing or would like to do for a client, then twist it around.

What if you did the opposite?

3 outcomes of this simple exercise. You discover an even better approach. Or you galvanise your belief in the first idea. Or both sound like they'll produce roughly the same outcome (so is it really such an important initiative?)

Today's sand sprint...

List and twist for the next client you're seeing. What if you called on them twice as frequently as you currently are? What if you halved the facetime you currently offer them? The sales amount you're asking for - what if you gave them a 20% discount... would you get more business? What if you raised the price by 20% - would they still see value (and could you be that price premium?) What if you invited them to a welcome event in your showroom? What if you stopped inviting them to anything, and took your show to *them*? What if you showed them one more product? What if you didn't show them *any* products - what would you ask them instead?

Don't assume your approach is the only right approach... mentally flip it over.

Deep blue musings...

* With a mighty plan to List and Twist, my client's workshop took an unexpected (but necessary) left turn, and we ended up on another discussion path. Sassafras. I had the Powerpoint slides ready and a great spiel about innovation prepared, and had to keep it in the bag. Blaze on regardless with what I wanted to say? Or take the conversation course the client was passionate about? Think you know the answer to that...

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day! Listing and twisting comes from *The seeds of innovation*, Elaine Dundon, Amacom, NY 2002.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Irrespective gratitude

"I would maintain that thanks are the highest form of thought,
and that gratitude is happiness doubled by wonder."

G.K. Chesterton

Coffee shop yesterday, overheard a man take a telemarketer's call, and it became plain he really wasn't interested. He said *"Thank you for the opportunity, but I won't..."*.

In a school yesterday, gave a talk to some politely grunting teenagers, and all walked off afterwards bar one, who said *"Thank you, I enjoyed that."*

Same day, a former client emailed me to take a pass on my services next year, and said *"Thank you for all you've helped us with - we won't be..."*. Thankfully another said *"Thanks for that discussion - let's get another meeting set up..."*

The child that comes over for play date with my cherubs and says *"Thank you for having, Mr Forrest"* (unprompted)... makes me feel old, but always welcome back with those manners (and hopefully rubs off on my two...).

No ungracious goodbyes or conversation terminators. No abrupt *"not for me today"*.

Just simple expressions of gratitude, followed by a yes or no.

You don't have to be a fawning sycophant with praise. But everyone wants a thanks for trying.

Are you doing it to everyone you interact with each day?

Today's sand sprint...

The client that takes your call. The receptionist that tells you the boss will be out in 5 minutes. The colleague that just did their job and followed-through on the paperwork you requested. The courier that picked up your parcel. The customer that says no. The brave soul that offers feedback. The friend that sent an email lead. Any individual who looks you in the eye and invests a little of their finite time, attention and effort, no matter that they're being paid to...

Thank people. Every opportunity. Every call. Every chat. Every communiqué. Every day.

Deep blue musings...

Because it's so easy, it's so easily missed. But I think not thanking people is 'trust rust'. The other party starts doubting that they're appreciated, or delivering something useful to you, or that you even get what they're trying to do for you. They don't trust that their future efforts will be respected or valued. So your stock - and their attention - goes down. Autotext thank-you notes on the bottom of your emails don't cut it. Cursory mumbled *"Thanks, mate"*'s don't cut it. Be pointed and be grateful... it will help you earn the right to sell more.

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Fiscal prudence

Compound interest - the eighth wonder of the world.

Inspired by Treasurer Swan's belt-tightening rebuild-the-coffers budget yesterday, consider the ways you can make the most of what's already in your sales banks;

- **The existing business bank** - the sales you know would probably come through even if you took a week off sick; are you doing all you can to shore them up & make them rock-solid? Are there even more sales that might easily stem from these sale-nursing conversations?
- **The client relationship bank** - the loyalty and friendships and trust you've built with the happy few; are you planning to make another deposit to grow this account before competitive fees eat away at it? Has one matured to a point you can confidently ask for a sales withdrawal opportunity?
- **The market reputation bank** - how the broader community are seeing you; are you doing enough to expose your good work, to inspire others to spread your gospel and be your unpaid sales team?
- **The passion, skills and knowledge bank** - is it rich enough to help enough people in enough mutually-profitable ways? What can you do to add to it this week? How can you combine these three funds to bolster your and your clients businesses?

You've got all this stock waiting to accrue interest and pay out dividends... are you keeping an eye them - investing more in each, and asking for payouts?

Today's sand sprint...

Today, in each bank, find one deposit opportunity, and look for one way to make a withdrawal. Hot tip - for compound interest to work for you, the deposit needs to be bigger than the withdrawal (unless you're about to cash out of your market).

Deep blue musings...

You invest a lot to help your clients. Time. Money. Effort. Headspace. Reputation. If you're confident that you've invested enough to ask for a small dividend in return, then do it today. If they say yes, thank them, take it, and plan your next deposit. If it's no, question whether the balance just isn't high enough yet for your wish to be granted, or if you're actually investing in the right stock.

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

Debunking myths

"640Kb ought to be enough for anybody."

Bill Gates, 1981

We used to think the world was flat.

We used to think Tiger was a wholesome boy.

We used to think VHS was the pinnacle of viewing technology.

We used to think you had to have the 'gift of the gab' to be a sales gun.

We used to think Japanese company 100-year plans were gold standard.

We used to think smoking was OK and certain activities made you go blind.

We used to think hunting skills were critical to growing a business.

We used to think Y2K was important and social media had limited business applications.

We used to think Powerpoint should be full of pie charts.

We used to think The Mullet was an all-purpose haircut (well, I did).

We used to think that it takes a certain type of person to succeed with *our* clients.

We used to think CRM systems were the answer to knowledge capturing.

We used to think passing colleagues through ropes was a red hot team activity.

We used to think that salespeople were just messengers wearing the employers brand.

Now we've changed our mind, we're not so sure.

The stuff that seems to survive time tests are simple truths. Work hard. Play nice. Help people. Give a damn. Think a little. Follow up. Keep moving. Individuals count. Be gracious and grateful. Moderation. Smile. Stuff will change. You'll be proven wrong in time - get over it, and don't let fear of having a shot today.

Today's sand sprint...

The latest trend report to hit your desk, the clever new book on the shelf, the new campaign the company is launching, the better mousetrap sales strategy you heard a competitor is about to run with...

... today, ignore it. Go straight to the fundamentals you know stand up in the long term. Do the simple stuff well. Build your sales approach from there.

Deep blue musings...

Who knows what the perfect sales approach is? Depends on the person, the day, the widget, the time, the circumstances, the smell in the room, the look on your face, the way the first question rolls off your tongue... I don't know. But I think on balance, sticking to non-trendy principles will do you more good than harm (seems to have worked for the most successful for some time). Get back to how you like being treated. Figure out what would make *this* person feel that way.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

Fire sale

"The roof... the roof... the roof is on fire...."

Bloodhound Gang

Having attended a great AMCHAM function on Friday with speakers discussing renewable energy trends, I intended to use this morning's sand shuffle to translate some presentation points into sales principles. They were there, but I've been sidetracked by a conversation I had at the forum.

Explaining she was moving with family from the flatlands to the wooded Adelaide Hills, my friend (avid Beach Runner) said she would be spending time this week emptying her drawers full of loose photos and putting them into albums. The rationale - if a fire hits her new tindery nest, the most precious irreplaceable material possessions would be easy to grab and run out with.

I shared with her that when I was a lad, my family lost everything in a house fire and had this same lesson shoved in our faces. Growing up in a country area devastated by Ash Wednesday, the mantra of *'be ready for the worst, prioritise what needs to be grabbed first, and don't get too wrapped up in the rest'* is burnt in my memory.

When a client calls you and says *"It's all gone horribly wrong"*, do you know what are (and how to advise them on) the *most* important things?

Today's sand sprint...

Imagine the worst that *can* happen post-sale *does* happen. Frantic pleas from the investor follow... what do they need to do first? If all else gets ugly, what one thing should they be grabbing and running out the door with? What can they do to minimise the long-term impact? Assume you can't stop the house burning down - what single piece of advice can you offer and give them something to cling onto?

Deep blue musings...

The karma of a disaster - how others rally around to help. Our little tribe lost pretty much everything (material) in a small town we'd just moved to. But the speedy and selfless generosity of a community to help out galvanised lifelong friendships and kept us there a long time. When you see a colleague, a client, a competitor in an unfair squeeze that's causing unfair grief... lend a hand. It probably won't get you a sale today. But I bet you enjoy it. And that will translate into business longer term.

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Shrink the task

Goals are made of small bits. Big goals? Just more small bits.

Goal - \$10M in revenue in 2011.

Daily action - Phone 6 qualified prospects to request a meeting and visit 3 existing clients to overdeliver and explore new opportunities to serve.

Goal - 20% growth by Christmas.

Daily action - Spend 20 minutes upskilling yourself as a valuable client resource and generate 1 new proposal to solve a valuable client's problem.

Goal - Circumnavigate the globe.

Daily action - Check the GPS, adjust the tiller, perform running maintenance, enjoy the view & remind yourself why.

Goal - Reputation as market's best by July 2011.

Daily action - prioritise the task list, create & deliver one more value-add, inspire one more person to spread the word, reaffirm your belief in service and hold your nerve.

Big sales targets are hard to make sense of each day.

But the simple action steps you can plan to get there? No excuse for not remembering and sticking to them.

Have you made the translation?

Today's sand sprint...

Take your big goal - yearly revenue or profit target, growth number, market share, key clients trying to onboard, promotion, skill level reached - and break it into a couple of simple daily actions that, done frequently enough at the right level of quality, you know will get you there. You just defined your non-negotiables. Now - every day. No excuses. (& if you don't know what they should be? Ask someone. Others have been there.)

Deep blue musings...

I believe there's a mighty place for creativity and innovation and tailoring in any professional sales role, even in highly commoditised markets. But there's a bigger place for simple, repetitive disciplines. Routines to fall back on. Proven practices that got you the best results thus far. In your quest for variety and lofty goals, don't forget simple daily steps that work. Adjust your mainsail every morning, do the maintenance, and enjoy the ride. Do you really think your job is harder than a lap of the planet?

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

New age business

Success factors for the modern business era.

At IBM's recent *Business Insight Forum 2010*, market research firm IBISworld boss Phil Ruthven presented data on where investors are putting their cash and what he believes to be the expectations of a new age business to warrant these investments. His checklist;

- They must be profitable and growing at greater than the industry average
- They must be unique in their products, operations and culture
- They must demonstrate world's best practice in giving customers value for money, in respecting their society and environment, and in their relationships with other stakeholders.

(Don't want much, really.)

Assume your client is the investor (they are) and you, mighty sales professional, are the new age business seeking their investment dollars (you are).

Can you tick these boxes? Would your clients tick them for you?

Today's sand sprint...

Is your little sales business (operating under your employers umbrella) profitable - are you covering your expenses and making more than the bare minimum margin your company is asking for? Stop discounting for easy short-lived wins - it erodes margin, and devalues *you*. Be fair in pricing, but carry a premium... it'll make you earn it.

Are you unique in how you serve your customers, how you deliver, how you make their place feel when you visit? Be world's best - at least in your client's world - and come up with 2 or 3 simple things you can do that will delight, add value, show your respect for sustainability and the environment you work in, and that differentiates you from old mate competitor up the street.

Deep blue musings...

Interesting term, 'value for money'. Sales person mental talk - *"This is so good, so valuable, they've got to see that what I'm asking for is worth it."* Client mental talk - *"It's my money, and I'll decide if it's valuable, based on whether it does precisely what I need when I need; whether the things I'll have to sacrifice to pay for it can or should be gone without a while longer; and whether the smile it puts on my face will have longevity"*. Consider B when you assess value - put the client's sunnies on.

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Memory panel of elders

One thing my boss taught me...

My first ever boss showed me that hard work gets recognised.

My next boss taught me that sales is a people business, so treat it warmly and with a smile.

My next boss embodied what it is to be passionate and vehement about what you do.

My next boss showed me that success leaves tracks, and if in doubt, ask and copy those who are winning.

My next boss showed me that if you can be an indispensable technical resource to your clients, numbers can easily follow.

My next boss taught me great numbers focus, and that to analyse the opportunity, you had to fully understand the give and take needed to make a partnership work.

My next boss was a knucklehead, and he taught me that dills can get through the filter (but you've still got to work with them, so take responsibility for making it work).

My next boss taught me that boss is another word for 'support person'.

My new bosses - they remind me daily that I work for those who trust and invest.

There's a panel of gurus in your memory - your previous managers, who left one indelible impression with you. Pull it out, dust it off, and let the panel of elders help you help a client today.

Today's sand sprint...

Ten minutes, a pen and paper, write the names of every boss you ever had. Then write the one thing each taught, showed or inspired in you. If it's negative, turn it on its head, write the opposite.

The wisdom of those who were paid more than you to get you working and developed at the best rate they could. How can you apply their best lessons to help you today?

Deep blue musings...

I missed a few bosses in there - less memorable. When I think about why, it was largely due to a lack of consistent approach or 'sticking to message'. They flip-flopped (except the knucklehead - he was consistently bad). Even when I disagreed with them, I respected (and learnt from) their adherence to a set of beliefs. Be consistent - it's memorable, and people will pay more attention.

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

I'm sorry, you were saying?

"I have a very short attention spa... oh, look! A bird!"

Homer J.

How do you hold a sales conversation with someone you can see is distracted?

Well, you can't.

So how to recapture attention?

Try calling them on it - *"I can see there's a lot going on at the moment... - would you like to continue?"*

Suggest an alternate time / location - *"How about we discuss this further at..."*.

Ask for candor - *"Is this a priority for you right now?"*

Ask a question - *"Does that make sense / how would you / why does this ...?"*

Paraphrase their words - *"Based on your comment that..., here's how this can help..."*

Blaze away - *"Everything else aside, here are the 3 key ways this can meet the goals you described..."*

Or just stop talking.

....

But you're not selling anything while they're looking out the window.

Today's sand sprint...

When the next client breaks eye contact to look at their mobile phone or see who's walking past their office, stop trying to pitch. Your story will only be absorbed and accepted by an engaged other. So strive for re-engagement - try one of the above. After all, you think you can help them, right? You owe it to them to facilitate their attention moving back to your chat.

Deep blue musings...

Some people just operate doing several things at once (they don't think they're being rude, even though you think they are). Others, they're showing they're bored or you've lost them technically or they've made a decision they're not going to proceed and are just too polite to stop you mid-spiel. Save everyone time and have the courage to stop a flowing (but dysfunctional) sales conversation in its tracks.... shall we continue?

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

The merits of elephants

I know the truth is out there, but blatantly naming it gives it Oxygen that's better used breathing life into something else that's truly helpful.

The elephant in the room - the potentially uncomfortable truth or prevailing opinion we know is there, but no-one wants to mention.

Tony Abbott unveiled an elephant last week when he said he lies a lot.

AFL footballer Jason Akermanis believes he unveiled another when he said there'd be culture shift in a football club if a gay player came out of the closet.

Akermanis' coach Rodney Eade pointed at one when he said that umpires should and do treat some players differently.

The problem with unveiling some elephants - it distracts from more important issues. I know the widget you're selling me won't last forever (but I want to stay enthusiastic about what it will do for me now!). I know you have 42 other clients that spend more than me (but I want to feel like I'm super-important to you!) I know the training you're offering us won't work well if the timing is wrong or it's not continually supported or the team aren't enthusiastic (but I want to be seen to be doing something positive and morale-boosting and that hopefully rubs off in some way). Don't bother showing me the elephant - it serves no great purpose.

I'm not suggesting telling porkies or bypassing important issues in your sales conversations (some elephants need to be exposed). But, in your efforts to create and nurture a mutually beneficial partnership, are there things that might better remain invisible elephants?

Today's sand sprint...

The elephant you know is there in the next sales conversation - your track record with back-order delays; the client's disastrous experience with a competitor you're dying to bring up; the new software you know will be here in 18 months that will suit them even better... ask yourself 3 questions;

1. Will unveiling the elephant do more good for this client than the harm it may cause by killing the sale, stopping them enjoying the benefits they've said they want today?
2. Would most reasonable people expect to be overtly informed of this elephant?
3. Would *you* want or expect to be told? Really?

Deep blue musings...

I hope I haven't given the wrong impression - I'm a big believer in karma, and lying (even by omission), cheating and stealing don't belong in the repertoire of a sales professional. But if you're going to unveil an elephant, be fully ready for the myriad of consequences that can follow. What's most important, what's most helpful for this person to know, and what's going to generate the best outcome for them and you (short *and* long term)?

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

We like to party

"Footy teams only get lucky once a year at best.

But you can enjoy the euphoria as many times as you win."

Marty & Ian

A repeat look at a great & provocative sales book - Ad guru Marty Kellard & Ian Elliot's *Stop Bitching Start Pitching*. So much in it I disagree with, so much I like.

One of their final points in the book - after making a well-planned, well-executed and ultimately successful 'pitch' for a big piece of business, and the client calls to say "*you've got the job*"... throw a party. Be thankful and grateful and let the messenger know how thrilled you are to have this chance to serve them. Invite them in to celebrate this new partnership with you. Have a knee's-up with your team - keep champagne ready in the fridge. Buy a cake. Formal handshakes or high-fives all round. Plaster the win on the intranet highlighting your gratitude to all involved. Thank-you cards for all the team, balloons, formal announcements, smiles, enthusiasm... let the release valve open for a short period.

You and your posse work really hard. If you're pitching enough, you're getting more no's than yes's. So reinforce just how good it feels when the moon's align and the client bestows their business on you. And include everyone you can in the party.

Today's sand sprint...

Find a reason to party this week. Catch someone doing something right. Win a piece of new business. Get a new product in with an old client. Get a testimonial from a longstanding customer. Find an anniversary or birthday or passed-probation opportunity. You don't have to book a group Caribbean cruise or smash the bank balance, but get chocolate frogs or a bottle of bubbles or just send a congratulations note around. Don't be a Scrooge - start a party, make your wins memorable (and inspire repeat performances).

Deep blue musings...

Great parties apply the sales rule of 3 - 'before', 'during' and 'after' contact points. Send the invitation (garner enthusiasm). Hold the event (enjoy the moment, connect). Then send out the photo's (ahh, good times we had, hey?). If you're inviting clients to parties, give them a bonbon ere, or call on them again within the week with a memento (unless it involves a photo them with that bottle of bubbles and a photocopier...). Leverage!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

M Kellard, & I Elliot, *Stop Bitching Start Pitching*, Murdoch Books, Australia, 2007.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Nervy, gravitas, bored and the dim bulb

"There are three reasons this will help you;..."

Sales gun with gravitas

4 types of sales presentations:

1. **Nervy** - fast, wide-eyed, fumbling, interrupting, wordy in the wrong spots. Not confidence-inspiring, betraying a lack of knowledge or belief - doomed to fail.
2. **Gravitastic** - centred, confident, well-paced, considered, fewer words to convey clear powerful points. Engaging, effective and profitable.
3. **Bored** - going through the motions, sluggish but skimming over critical detail, little thought paid to a call to action. Tone and body language gives it away.
4. **Dim bulb** - not paying attention to client cues and feedback, out of sink with what they want, a sense they just don't get it. All about them.

Which will you deliver today?

Today's sand sprint...

Before you sit in front of your next client, add some watts to your presentation bulb. Are you ready to ask a good question, to listen carefully to their response, and shift your sails according to their words? Slap yourself about the chops to stave off boredom - this is someone you maybe able to help, and can help you handsomely in return... ready to give them enthusiastic attention?

Now - breathe deep. Slow your thoughts down. Focus on 3 clear things you'll need to discuss in this meeting, keep your message simple and your tone measured. Still your hands and be confident - you are a mighty supply partner about to instill confidence in a goal-seeking or problem-plagued individual.

Deep blue musings...

I think the 4 presentation styles apply to your writing as well. What's your natural bias? Check your last 10 emails to clients - do they sound amped up(!!!), a little nervy? Recycled same-ol'-same-ol' just cut and pasted? Addressing what they've actually asked of you? Or the crystal-clear, friendly and concise words of a sage consultant? Make a tweak today.

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

The equity in indispensability

"I can't live (if living is without you)..."

Mariah Carey (not quoted nearly enough)

Now I'm no Financial Planner, but consider the concept of *equity*.

The value of what you've got banked in your home or shares or cash, that you can draw down on or borrow against to enjoy or grow your wealth.

I think top sales professionals build equity through their 'indispensability' (real word, looked it up).

- **The product you sold me** is now such an integral time-saving, revenue-generating and peace-of-mind inspiring part of my life (how did I cope before?)
- **The service you provide** has proven critical to helping us run effectively, deal with hiccups and feel confident to focus our attention on other scary parts of our lives (you're a highly valued safety net).
- **The personality you bring** to our lives makes us smile with joy, pumps up our tyres, puts a spring in everyone's step and has become a model we try to emulate as we strive to evolve our culture... please don't leave.

The thing about equity - it can be leveraged to help you achieve your goals.

If you're indispensable, it's worth something.

(But if you're going to keep drawing down on it... you've gotta keep topping up).

Today's sand sprint...

Consider what you're doing for the next client that is, well, indispensable. The spiffy solution you're helping them with, the back-up support you've demonstrated, the air of positivity you know they love about dealing with you, even the hand-holding in stormy seas you offer. Indispensable? Not yet? Can you do something today that gets you 1 step closer?

If you *are* Captain Indispensable, how can you leverage that equity? What chance can you ask for, what product can you suggest they trial, what premium should you request? (But if you're taking cash out, better put some more indispensable back in.)

Deep blue musings...

Now the painful reality check - of course you're dispensable. It might hurt them to do it, but by jiminy, one day, you're being let go. So... either live glass-half-empty and say "*someone will just come along and better the service I offer, so why bother going the extra mile*", **or** consider the equity in the half-full bit - "*there's enough on the table to have a crack at, to go a little harder and further for, to put on the Indispensability undies (even if I grow out of them soon...)*". Choose half-full equity today, C.I.!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

The banner

There's work, and there's life, and it's all just part of a bigger casserole.



My babes and their handiwork after Mum was away for a few days.

Because home-made is heart-warming.

Because you don't have to be sophisticated to show you care.

Because time and effort gets recognised.

Because being part of a team - a family - is anchoring and prized like diamonds.

(Because my kids are important to me... and your clients' kids are important to them).

Agricultural and a little amateur doesn't make it bad. Don't wait for the spit polish machine to make your efforts for a client perfect... show them how much you give a damn today.

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Synch your words

Do as the framed words said you'd do.

Business commentator Robert Gottliebsen's *10 Best and 10 Worst decisions of Australian CEO's* applies hindsight to what triggered some staggering fortune rises and Fosberry flops.

Reviewing the fall of big finance businesses that forgot to follow their founding principles during a grab for cash, Gottliebsen offers *"Make sure your corporate principles are carried out in practice"*. That it's well and good to have a mission statement on the wall, but if you don't make small daily choices with these words as your guide, you're headed down a directionless (and sometimes disastrous) path.

Johnson & Johnson blazed a trail for living by a credo when many years ago they voluntarily recalled Tylenol - *"We are responsible to the communities in which we live and work..."*. Conversely, Enron's Values Statement contained the words *"Ruthlessness, callousness and arrogance don't belong here"*.

Just words, or a chance to benchmark your choices & be guided down the right path?

Today's sand sprint...

If you haven't read it for a while, go out to reception and review the Mission or Values Statement.

If it's not at reception... why not? Are you ashamed of it?

If you don't have one, make your own. *"I am commit to doing these non-negotiables in these ways for these reasons."*

Now review a decision you have to make today - a customer call, a tendering opportunity, a tough conversation... are your actions in synch with your principles?

Deep blue musings...

One other suggestion Gottliebsen has - *"Strategies for one era may not be the right ones for the next"*. Be flexible, be prepared to change when customer preferences and profit generating opportunities shift. Keep the principles, but tweak the actions to stay in synch with market desires.

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

10 Best and 10 Worst decisions of Australian CEO's, Robert Gottliebsen, Penguin Australia 2003.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Be a pink batt

We like insulation.

Winter! (Or, for runners on the other side of the ball, Summer!) So let's talk about insulation. We bipeds like insulation.

It goes in the roof to buffer us from cold and heat.

We double glaze to insulate against street noise.

We run on treadmills to insulate us from yappy dogs and rainy mornings.

We buy managed funds to insulate us from hard stock choices and big value falls.

We put up electric gates to insulate us from the prying eyes of passers by.

We use email to insulate ourselves from tough mouth-to-mouth conversations.

We hire customer service teams to insulate us from irate customer calls.

We hold meetings to insulate us from feeling lonely in our sales roles.

We make a coffee to insulate us from filling in the CRM system notes.

Our customers like insulation too.

They have 'Gatekeepers' to insulate them from annoying(ly effective) salespeople.

They have preferred supplier arrangements to insulate them from having to say *"It's actually my choice, you haven't shown you'll cut it, so no."*

They even use words like *"Leave it with me"* and *"I'll talk it over with my partners"* and *"Give me a week to think it over"* to insulate themselves from offending you or making a bad choice.

We like insulation.

Can you be insulation for your clients?

Today's sand sprint...

Consider the elements that your clients *most* want to be insulated from. The fear of making a poor purchasing decision? The downtime that comes with product failure? The dressing down from their boss when it becomes apparent the choice was poor?

Put on some fibreglass and show them how you'll insulate them from these unwanted consequences. Talk in a fashion that engages the client and helps them understand. Physically be there for the early hand-holding days. Get back to them pronto. Build above-and-beyond service initiatives that reduce their perspiration. Give them tools to sell their decision internally.

Deep blue musings...

For you to be an effective insulator, you have to be willing to expose *yourself* to the elements. To cop the heat, or icy stares, or winds of change, or the early morning dew that's evaporated by the time everyone else wakes up (but you saw, 'cause you were up early planning and prioritising and being a bit more than the average batt). We like insulation. We'd like it a lot if you'd be willing to be ours.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

Burning down the house

"All you need is clients..."

Misquoted John Lennon

After yesterday's *Beach Run*, you were inspired to have insulation installed in your business premises ceiling, but sadly, it came through Minister Garrett's scheme, and the whole place went up in smoke.

Your building, cinders. Products, gone. Your infrastructure, decimated. To compound things, the insurance company tells you that the policy had lapsed - your business is bankrupt. Now the carpark is full of anxious looking people.

The Finance Team look worried - they have nothing to invoice, no accounts to process - they're outta work.

The Warehouse Team are twitchy - no goods in or goods out stuff to do. Let go.

Legal? No recourse, no-one to sue - off to Centrelink.

The CEO? There goes a BMW speeding off to the Headhunter's.

With no products, no services, no support, no infrastructure, nothing but the nicely pressed clothes on your back (and a conveniently parked company car across the road), you've got the business on your shoulders today.

Why? Because you're the one ultimately in charge of the thing businesses need most.

Clients.

(And if even *they* deserted you? You've got the skills to get more.)

Today's sand sprint...

Take 10 minutes today to forget internal politicking, the whizz-bang new product that just landed at the loading dock, even the beautiful new glossies that will help promote your position as professional market trailblazers.

Pick up the phone, call a client and book a meeting. Request a coffee and an account review conversation. Get toe-to-toe and ask how you might help them a little more.

All the systems & folks that live in the bricks and mortar are great, and with time and money, businesses can rebuild them. But the people stuff? *You* can fireproof it.

Deep blue musings...

They call selling skills 'soft' skills - human, warm'n'fuzzy, hard to learn a formula for. But that's all you've got when the building burns down. And you don't have to wait for the insulation to ignite to put them to good use for lots of people today - there's an army of your colleagues waiting to be fed and sheltered through your client-touching efforts. Give the soft stuff an extra 10 minutes today!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

The apprenticeship

Earning your stripes.

3 examples of newbies and expectations of success;

1. A coaching client in their first sales role wanting immediate sales success. Enthusiastic, clever, and frustrated that the numbers aren't climbing more steeply. Coming to the realisation that it's going to take time and earning some relationship brownie points before client ears are receptive to solutions.
2. Israel Folau - a Rugby League Wunderkind who's about to transition to AFL football for the biggest purse the code has offered (\$4M in 4 years). A sporting freak, massive expectations, and some disgruntlement from AFL journeymen who aren't making that coin and resent an unproven being offered such filthy lucre.
3. The hopefuls I saw lining up in the cold yesterday to audition for a new TV talent show. Desperate to be discovered. Most no doubt possessing talent, maybe aware that just a few of the hundreds of thousands will get in. But still they come (gotta be in it to win it)!

Today, will you be grinding and building on relationships to build lego-block size wins?
Flaunting talents & setting super high expectations (maybe putting noses out of joint)?
Or one of the masses lining up for a small percentage shot?

Today's sand sprint...

Consider which strategy is most appropriate for the client you're about to visit. Are they going to take time to get to know, trust, believe in you, before they'll give you a shot? What do you have to do to drop a coin in that bank today? Are they ready to be exposed to your technical brilliance and have big promises made to sway them (and can your butt cash that cheque?)
Or are you one of many wanting a finite piece of their spending budget, and is it a case of getting in line and staying in line (is the potential purse worth the low chance?)

Deep blue musings...

I think all 3 approaches have a place, but be conscious of which newbie situation you find yourself in, and what expectations you're setting (for them or for you). I don't buy lottery tickets, so I'm unlikely to ever be an overnight millionaire. But I *am* aiming to build another lego block win each and every day - I think that makes for the soundest of sales foundations. (Hey, I could be wrong. What do *you* think?)

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Headlines, Rock stars and Acts

Mesmerising! Swashbuckling! Stupefying!

It's Friday, run a little faster with me.

Write down the 3 words you *most* want to be associated with by your customers.

(Educated guess - Professional! Helpful! Knowledgeable! Try harder.)

Now write down 3 (metaphorical) Rock Stars that are those words incarnate.

(Your local GP! The concierge at your regular interstate hotel! The IT dude upstairs!).

Finally, write down the one act they perform that gets you most thinking those words.

(Takes notes in the consult! Gives me educated choices! Immerses themselves passionately in research!)

Now - you do it.

Today's sand sprint...

3 words. Your personal charter. Your self-determined reputation.

3 Rock Stars. The inspirers. The role models. The benchmark.

3 acts. The cadence things. The over'n'over. The simple tasks that differentiate.

Go on. Today.

Deep blue musings...

Share mine with you. Discipline. Lucrative. Inspiring. The early morning lone beach runner. Warren Buffet. Michael Jordan. Puts in when no-one else is awake. Makes '*What's the long term potential ROI*' a focus of every decision. Demonstrates better peripheral vision than anyone else in the game.

It's Friday. You've got nothing to lose, and an industry-best reputation to gain.

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

2 laps

Slippery when wet.

Bon Jovi album, and true of the Sherrin

Halfway through the Carlton - Melbourne game on Saturday (Aussie Rules Football), the rain belted down. Silky skills and aerial performances turned into fumbles, slips, soccering and a hard slog just to make ground. Got ugly, and one team (err, mine) started to struggle with conditions.

2 comments from the broadcasting box;

"With modern teams training indoors when it rains, and with so many games now played under the roof, it's like some players have forgotten how to play in the wet."

and

"Just keep your feet, son!"

Practice in the conditions you'll need to perform in, and remember you won't win a footrace when you're prostrate.

Today's sand sprint...

Before an important client meeting this week, grab a colleague or boss and do a run-through. Simulate the tone, the questions, the feedback you think you'll be getting. Have them throw in a curve ball, get a little irate - test you on how well you can keep your feet when it gets slippery. Make it rain in the conference room, so you know how to handle it in the client's world.

Deep blue musings...

While the spectacle of the game might have been less impressive with the water, the cream rose to the top. The gun players shifted their gears quickly, adjusted how they played to deal with conditions, and upped their workrate. When it rains in your business this week, will you shift gears and dig a little deeper? Clients need you to.

(PS my team, and the cream that is Chris Judd, rose to the top... lovely to watch, even when ugly!)

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

3 commitment-meeting points

Great expectations.

Already knee-deep into a busy week, yesterday was a day of setting, managing and assessing expectations. I committed to some tight timelines for a few clients, am skating perilously close to blowing some others, and had the foresight to build a little grace period into a sensible few. I've also been on the receiving end of some inspiring 'came-good-on-a-commitment' from some frighteningly busy people (inspiring) and got let down by a few that are in radio silence mode after their commitment periods expired (frustrating).

It's seen me reflect on 3 chances to manage expectations;

1. **At the time of commitment** - can you really do all that? Is the timeframe so critical, so impressive if you meet it, but setting you up to fail if you don't (and denting your personal service brand?)
2. **Before your expiry date** - get it in before the (mental) tender box gets locked. Not necessarily 25 minutes after you first made the commitment (am I your only client?), but beat the buzzer.
3. **Shortly after the expectation was met** - the bonus, delighting follow-up phone call. Is everything still OK, have we (over)delivered on what you wanted, is there anything else I can do?

And when you find you bit off more than you can chew - let someone know ASAP. The longer you're in radio silence, the greater the consequences of failing to reach expectations become.

Today's sand sprint...

Check the front, middle and back end points of a commitment you're about to make. Can you do it justice or is it unnecessarily tight? When does it need to be in by, and working backwards, what are the checkpoints you need to diarise? When and what follow-up will you make to remind them of how amazing it is to have you on the case?

Deep blue musings...

(Reassurance note... if I made you a commitment this week... it will be met.) If a client has made a commitment to you, can you help them avoid under-delivering on expectations? Consider sending a 3-day pre-D-day email - *"Hi Jo, hope you're having a great week. I saw this article (attached) and thought you might enjoy it. I'm really looking forward to seeing the document you're shooting over this weekend - think we can do some great things for you. Speak soon...."* Won't always work, but help them avoid embarrassment, and avoid feeling let-down!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

A daily meeting

"A daily meeting focuses collective intelligence on the issues and opportunities at hand. Without making it a daily discipline, don't kid yourself into thinking your business is getting this focused attention."

Verne Harnish, "The Growth Guru", Fortune.com

In his great book "*Mastering the Rockefeller Habits*", business growth strategist Verne Harnish advocates building a 'meeting rhythm' in any business - daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, yearly. For his daily meetings, Verne suggests spending just 5 minutes on 3 topics;

- **What's up** - what's the single most important task for you to focus on today - your biggest goal or the opportunity you're giving most effort in coming hours?
- **One daily measure** - how are you travelling, what ground needs to be made up today, what buffer can you strive to build?
- **Where are you stuck** - identify one frustration in your world that you'll look into further, ask others about, let the committee of sleep work on during the week.

Harnish believes this structure should be used for any sales team, irrespective of geographic constraints (you have mobiles) and should happen at the same time each day.

My 20c addition - if you're not part of a team, or this simple and proven effective practice is proving too disciplined for your group (note - disciplined, not impossible)... do it by yourself.

Today's sand sprint...

Diarise a daily 5 minute appointment-with-self. Identify a time you're least likely to want to change it, and lock it in. Really. Lock it in. Find something to anchor it to. First thing before everyone else in the house wakes up. In the driveway before you pull out to go to work. Before you turn the coffee machine on at the office. Heck, in the shower if you need to (just keep pen and paper handy and dry to capture your thinking post-wash). Then go through the drill, every day. One daily focal point, a measure and a challenge to mull over.

Deep blue musings...

You brush your teeth every night before bed - that's no fun, but you know it's important. You take your multivitamins every morning - they taste foul, but they're good for you. You go for a run or walk or to synchronised swimming classes each day - painful, but beneficial. Why would you not give yourself, your clients, your business success, 5 minutes of daily routine to produce remarkable short- and long-term results? Don't make excuses - those are for non-salespeople.

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

Mastering the Rockefeller Habits, V Harnish, Select Books, New York, 2006.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Rainmakers and thick necks

Why do Sales Rainmakers have thick necks?

It's because they're constantly shifting their head.

Leaning forward into a conversation to show interest.

Twisting slightly to align their ears with a client's mouth to clearly hear their words and their meaning.

Carrying their burdens (and those of clients, and of their business) on their shoulders because they're uber-accountable.

Looking down at their daily action sheet to focus on the short term must-do's today.

Craning their view skyward to consider longer term opportunities and dreaming about other ways to be valuable.

Looking back down again - there's where today's commitments get met and bills paid.

Lifting eyes North again to focus on long term goals, creative endeavours and bold new trails that make their days interesting and enjoyable and fuel a little more discipline.

Turning backwards to review their success path, sift through lessons from the mess and remind themselves of where they've come from.

Cast glances sideways to see who's beside them, who they can partner with to better help their VIP's.

Then look forward again at the glimmering prize on the horizon and the opportunity horses waiting to be mounted that will carry them along to grasp it.

Then down again....

Today's sand sprint...

Thicken your neck. Move your head.

Deep blue musings...

It's not because they're all Rugby Players.

But an observation - many Sales Rainmakers have impressive sporting pedigrees. They understand the concepts of sacrifice and effort and practice and teamwork and hard work and working together in scrums. They play for premierships, and know that to earn the right to be in the final, it starts with a personal choice today. Get a bigger necktie, you'll need it.

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Grandmotherly advice

"Money doesn't grow on trees, you know..."

Everyone's Grandma

The mighty Friday challenge - in your next sales conversation, apply these 5 pieces of matriarchal guidance you had hammered into you as a sprite.

"Look me in the eye when you're speaking, please."

"If you can't say anything nice, don't say anything at all."

"Wait your turn to speak."

"Use your manners when asking for something, dear."

"Keep trying - practice makes perfect, you know!"

Although my fee's are higher than your Nanna's, I'm on a limb here - those 5 chestnuts will get you as good a result as any SPIN selling technique...

Today's sand sprint...

Make eye contact - real eye contact, not a glazed going-through-the-motions vacant stare. Keep your critical opinions of competitors to yourself - by all means frame the positives of what you're offering around areas you perceive competitors might be weaker in, but don't slag them off. When a client is speaking (and client = everyone), wait until they've finished - don't interrupt - it's rude. Then - ask for a chance, and use pleasantries and gratitude when you do.

And if that doesn't work? Have another go.

Deep blue musings...

The top quote - maybe it does, but you have to plant and water them first. We're always looking for low-hanging sales fruit. Easy pickings. Problem is, so is everyone else. The real bounty - the coconuts atop the limbless palms - are too challenging for most to have a crack at. You need skills and tools and persistence and assistance... but it's up to you to ask and develop and try. And it's less crowded up the top. Start working on your sales For(r)est today!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Being regal

"We are not amused."

HRH

As most of Australia celebrates the Queen's Birthday public holiday, consider how Her Majesty stays so, well, Queenly.

It started early. Grooming, deportment, elocution and regal duty training. Being immersed in an environment that supported her desired behaviours. Dressing for the title. Hanging out with other Royals and Aristocratic types. Reinforcing regal behaviours through ceremony and rituals and crowns and scepters. Committing for the long haul... being personally accountable for how the public perceives her.

If you took E2 and placed her in a hoodie and baggy pants on the streetcorner with some homies, I'm certain she'd stay stiff upper lip for a while. Leave her there for long enough though, and she might just start Krumping.

The point of this royal tale - if there's something you want to be, surround yourself with other people and processes that will support it. Your environment rubs off - let it galvanise desired behaviours, or gnaw away at your prior efforts.

Today's sand sprint...

The day you've got planned ahead - are you dressed for it, in a way that supports how you want to be perceived? The cat's you're going to hang out with - are they aspirational, or dragging your mojo and attitude down? The tools you're using - are they gold-standard, or some cobbled-together stuff that sullies your professionalism? The checkpoints you've built to map the day, check your results and reward your efforts - are these ceremonies befitting of the MIGHTY sales gun you're aiming to be? Plan your day like it was designed for your goal version of you.

Deep blue musings...

Her Majesty works hard (even on Christmas day). Even when she's not doing ceremonial things or public-touching, keeping up a royal front (even behind closed doors) would take some work. Unless you've worked so hard to ingrain it into your daily routines... then it probably just comes naturally... not work at all. Food for thought. Ma'am.

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Ad man advice

"If you can get people repeating (your ad) in their own heads, that's pretty good, because that doesn't cost you money."

Russel Howcroft

Advertising expert and CEO of agency George Patterson Y&R, Russel Howcroft regularly offers insight into what makes a good ad on the popular TV show *The Gruen Transfer*. In a recent interview, Howcroft offered 3 pieces of advice for getting your message to stick in a potential purchaser's head;

- **Repetition** - *"Being repetitive and irritating for the right reason is likely to generate success."*
- **Laughter** - *"There is a direct correlation between likeable advertising and advertising that sells... make their day more interesting."*
- **Aspiration** - *"Aspiration plays a massive role in generating brand engagement."*

Show people how you can improve their lives, contribute to a jovial journey as you walk beside them, and do it over and over and over and....

Today's sand sprint...

Make someone smile - bring positivity and levity and a little humour (even cheesy) into an otherwise serious ROI-focused day. Then find out what they want, and show them just how they might achieve it through partnering with you. Discuss a case study of a similar client who's reached an oasis. Give them a vision, and discuss the means to get there.

Finally, don't think saying it once is enough. It's not. They're busy, they're not listening yet, they'll forget. If you want to help them, repeat.. repeat.. repeat.

Deep blue musings...

In Howcroft's interview, he quotes famous Ad man David Ogilvy - *"The consumer is not a moron - she's your wife"*. Imagine if the prospective customer you're about to try and convert was your brother or sister or mother or significant other... would you approach it differently? Would you be comfortable that they'd still want to sit down for Sunday Roast with you after the dealings done?

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

Russell Howcroft Q10, Greg Callaghan, The Weekend Australian Magazine, June 12-13 2010.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Ad man advice #2

"What changes our behaviour and attitude is not proportionate to how much it costs."

Rory Sutherland

Let's run with yesterday's advertising theme just a few more paces. Current Vice-Chairman of mega agency The Ogilvy Group, Rory Sutherland was one of the first to jump on the 'internet-as-advertising-medium' bandwagon.

In a recent TED talk, Sutherland discussed something called Behavioural Economics, and said that if you looked at many of the most successful initiatives in business (things that positively shifted consumer behaviour), there was no correlation between how expensive the initiative was and how effective or impactful it was. That a multi-billion dollar merger between two big companies may have negligible effect on you as a customer, but hiring a bubbly new staff member in your local cafe might significantly increase client satisfaction.

Sutherland *"The people with the power want to do big expensive things - what we need are people with power but no money"*. To design and do the small stuff. The stuff that actually changes minds.

Today's sand sprint...

Imagine you took your annual promotional expenditure allowance back to the boss and said *"all I want is 5% of this"*. (Boss dances a jig). You've now got 95% less back-me-up cash to make an impact with your clients. Where do you focus this remaining 5%? Is it on potential new clients or rewarding existing clients? Is it on attending the same trade shows as you always have? Is it on wowing 1 client in a big way, or 10 in a small way? (Here's the hard bit...) Let this question run through your brain for the rest of the week - *"What's one leettle thing that would really delight my best clients - would make their lives better, easier, and really make me and my business stand out in the right way?"*

Deep blue musings...

Sutherland believes organisations should employ something called a 'Chief Detail Officer' - the one person ultimately responsible for making sure that the small stuff gets thought about, and then done, and done well, over and over. Your organisation, and your customer group, is incredibly lucky to already have one of those people.... right?

The best part about inexpensive stuff? Just takes grey matter, elbow grease and you.

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

Sweat the small stuff, Rory Sutherland on TED talks - www.ted.com.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Ten to go

The run's almost done (I hope we haven't jumped the shark).

June 30 is 10 working days away... and the end of these *Beach Run* emails.

I hope you've enjoyed and benefited from these sandy spurs - reminders and inspirers and eye-openers and pleas to dig a little deeper for your customers, your team members, your boss and your own sales success.

Just before 70's TV show *Happy Days* finished its long run at the top, there was an episode where Fonzie prepped his motorbike to 'jump the shark' - a live shark in a tank in Arnold's parking lot. It's widely recognised as the beginning of the end for the show - the writers had obviously run out of ideas.

I hope I haven't jumped the shark. (You'd tell me if I had, right?)

Just in case the motorbike is revving, we're aiming to go out with a sales muscle-burning sprint.

I'd love you to [email me](#) your favourite *Beach Run* or *Big Picture Details* email (for some of you, that's 2 & 1/2 years worth). The highest vote gatherers get a fresh coat of paint and featured in the 'Top 3' in the last few days of June.

Today's sand sprint...

Book a meeting with your best 3 clients, and do a mid-year review. What have you been doing well that they've really valued? What do they want repeated? Where have you been (or are at risk of) 'jumping the shark' - what's outlived its usefulness and needs rethinking? Get feedback and thought fodder from those paying the bills... you'll learn a lot by lifting your eyes, and they might just be inspired to stick around.

Deep blue musings...

The sequel to *Happy Days - Joanie loves Chachi*. The sequel to *The Beach Run - The 42 MIGHTY Businesses e-support suite*. An exclusive, flexible opt-in array of e-support tools only for clients who've invested in 42+ hours of my support in 2010-2011. I'll preview these services for you next week - and we'll aiming for sequel success closer to *T2* than the kid in the leather jacket. Sales Rainmaker observation - doesn't matter where you're at right now, you get to build on everything you've ever done (the good and bad). Waa - Waaaa!

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Inspiration and small rooms

"Whatever gets you through the night.... it's all right...."

John Lennon

Before reading on, please know 3 things - if I cross a line here, I did it trying to help you; there is a moral coming; and we wash our hands thoroughly.

One of my sprites has inherited her father's (well, the whole male population's) charming habit of pausing to read in the smallest room in the house (right, no going back now). It's peaceful - good thinking and reflection time. Whenever we can't find her, chances are, there she'll be.

Rather than trying to discourage this (who knows what Freudian issues might occur later), we're using it as an opportunity. She also needs to practice some maths problems for homework. So we've put a puzzle sheet in a plastic envelope, attached a pencil to it, and, err, sat it at arm's length.

My observation working with successful people - they all have some weird but effective personal rituals, they all make room for some quiet reflective time to map out their next move, and they find ways to kill 2 birds with one stone.

Today's sand sprint...

If it's not the WC, where's your happy quiet place to mull over the day's events, plan the next steps, and write it all down? Where do you do your best thinking - the car, before you drift off to sleep, as you boil the kettle in the office, as you stroll around the garden each morning? Are you planning to leverage it to best effect by putting the tools you'll need at arm's length when you're there? Dictaphones, note pads, ipads, whiteboards, post-it notes... write it down.

Deep blue musings...

In same said room, flicking through her normal reading material (kids mag), I read about a student who'd won an invention competition. They'd attached a shoulder strap to a pencil case because they found their school bag was overfull and left no room for pencils. Now a stylish hand-bag alternative for kids, with pockets for coins and a mobile. Primary schooler wisdom - *"My ideas come from what I need."* What do you need to help you better serve your clients, manage your time, generate more leads today? Invent it. Go on.

(Apologies to the non-loo-readers if I've offended sensibilities.... but you really should try it... Now let us never speak of this again.)

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Vision and the 2 x 4

"The point is to have a long term perspective."

The Dalai Lama

Like a bit of timber holding up a roof truss, your planning efforts, your perspective and ultimately your outcomes all have three dimensions;

Length - how far ahead are you looking? What are you aiming to achieve at the farthest point? Where will the next reinforcement (gang nail / support beam) be placed so that you can focus on getting there first?

Depth - how much effort do you have to invest to support that traverse? What level of training or skill or focus do you need to build and apply? How much time and energy and resource is needed to bear the load for your defined length?

Breadth - how wide do you need to spread the load? What peripheral considerations or support must you consider? How will you disseminate the pressures that come with such weighty expectations?

The length you decide on will determine the depth you'll need. The combined weight of length and depth determines how broad your resourcing and distribution should be.

But if you aren't clear on how far you want your strut to span? Then you're either over-resourcing and wasting valuable timber, or you're running the risk of cutting a piece that won't bear the load.

Today's sand sprint...

For July 1st 2010 to December 31st 2010 - set a clear goal. Determine your length.

Then look at depth - how many clients, sales, proposals, training courses, phone calls, hours per day, schmoozy dinners, clever initiatives, will you have to build and deliver to support it?

Finally, breadth - whose help will you need? What's happening on the border of your vision that could impact it? What tools or disciplines or mates will you need to recruit to help you deliver the depth that will support the length?

Take a bit of 2x4 to the 6-months you've got in front of you.

Then? Think about a longer span...

Deep blue musings...

For the natural project managers in the audience - those good at defining an endpoint, building the plan and then finishing the job - this carpentry exercise might come easy. For those more inclined to just get cutting and hammering and keep going 'til you fall over... think about what you want the structure to look like at the end. The 5 or 10 year plan. The finished pergola. The next career step. What the money this job earns you will buy your family. How you'll allocate your spare time when you run out of gangnails. Otherwise you'll run out of land to build on, and just have a yardful of trusses - impressive, but random.

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Your Top 3 Beach Runs - Number 3...

"Three for free"

From 25/8/2009

"A free lunch is only found in mouse traps."

John Capozzi

3 free experiences I had this past week;

- A restaurateur relaunching his business, offering a free come-try-our-new-menu lunch to a group of networked colleagues. Implied cost - if you like it, tell others, and come back to spend (*I did, I have and I will - beautiful food at XO Tapas in Hutt St!*)
- Two young ladies walking around the football oval signing people up for a free raffle (win a football). Even though it was free, people were still reluctant. Unspoken potential cost - after the draw, they'll sell my details to a timeshare holiday place who will harangue me in the middle of dinner. I don't need a football that badly.
- Some clever professionals donating time and wisdom to speak at a forum I'm building. The cost of taking this free help - expose and endorse the generous parties (they didn't ask, but I feel obligated and want to), owe them a favour, create a forum worthy of their presence. Worth those costs and more.

'Free' comes with different costs.

Today's sand sprint...

Think of what you can offer your clients for free this week, then decide what you're actually asking them to pay. Do they understand the unspoken cost? Are they willing (or able) to pay it? Is your free stuff worth more to them than the cost? If you give it away and they don't pay, what has is cost you? How much do you need to recoup for the 'free' offer to have paid for itself?

Deep blue musings...

Free can be cheesy, tacky, even sneaky. Or it can be value-adding, generously sneak previewing or a thanks-for-your-loyalty. The thing is though - it's never really free, for you or the recipient. Understand the costs, overt or implied, and make sure you're both willing and able to pay them!.

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

Postscript 23/6/10 - The restaurant I plugged - 'free' wasn't enough, nor was genuinely great food. It closed. Financial rigor, solid business planning, discipline, focus, the well-thought-through-and-Plan-B-costed structure to underpin the sizzle and the promo's... that's the bit that enables the 'free' to work its magic. Something's got to pay for the funbus tossing lollies out the window to keep rolling along!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Coming in at Number 2...

"Sell or help?"

From 5/10/2009

"Because salespeople don't fix your roof,
we don't employ them to give you a quote."

Utter Gutters radio ad

I heard that ad on the radio last week. It's a great perspective to consider.

Does the client want or need to be sold to?

Or do they need a tradesperson to ask the educated questions that uncover their source of pain, the client's vision of pleasure, and define clearly how they as suppliers can help the latter replace the former?

"Sales" is the vehicle we, as niche diagnosticians, use to find out if we can help, show *how* we can help, and facilitate the mutual-help transactions ('cause you can help me in return by paying... \$, word of mouth, personal satisfaction).

Sales is not just the outcome we strive for; it's the process we go through.

And it's certainly not something professionals 'do to someone'.

Today's sand sprint...

Be a roofer today. Go in not with a desire to flog product, but to understand needs and wants. To be a consultant, an uncoverer, an educator, an advice provider, and if you can, an 'oasis-in-the-desert' describer.

Then offer a leg-up into the pleasure wagon - invite the client to exchange the fair price for your brand of help. Simple question, in your own words (without which it's all just been a '*you show me your's, I'll show you mine*' exercise).

Deep blue musings...

If Utter Gutters are training their roofers to ask the right questions in the right way, to be perceptive to how clients like to receive their information and to constantly look for one more person to help... I think they'll smash their numbers.

These are the basics that we sales professionals, in the absence of roofer training, have to nail to make up for not being tradies.

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

Postscript 24/6/10 - The mightiest sales professionals I know treat their sales career as a highly skilled trade. If the best way for a tradie to grow their business is to do amazing work, then this is how sales tradies do it too. More deft questioners, more practiced rapport-builders, faster follow-up'ers and applicers of polish that leaves a finer finish on the client satisfaction surface. You might be able to fix gutters AND actively sell well - more power to you. Most can't. Do what you do do reallllyyy well... and you'll do lots of it.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

And by your vote, at Number 1...

"Think week."

From 19/9/2008

"It's the world's coolest suggestion box."

Stephen Lawler, on Bill Gates' Think Week reading list

Twice a year every year, Bill Gates squirrels himself away in a lakeside cabin to think. 7 days, 18 hours a day, no other human contact, and a pile of papers, reports, books and idea submissions. From early morning until 3am, Bill reads and thinks.

It is this removing himself from the daily machinations of Microsoft that Bill says has given rise to many of the directions the global IT industry takes today. Employees can send him reports and ideas for new technology they think Microsoft should investigate and how to deal with problems. He'll read and think about them.

In solitude, in a remote lakehouse, one of the busiest people on the planet dedicates time to thinking.

The BIG PICTURE...

Busy? Is that likely to change? Can't find time to scratch yourself, let alone think?

Are you really busier than Bill Gates?

The details...

Today, forget about Think Week - find a *Think 15 minutes*. Between sales calls, before you put your Weetbix in the bowl, as you sit under a tree in your car eating a sandwich.

Send the phone to message bank, and dedicate your head to the biggest challenge you are facing in your business. How could you fix it, what would you like to achieve, what could you try, who else has faced this issue? Find a block of time... and turn it into a regular weekly habit.

Bill seems to do OK.

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

Postscript 25/6/10 - 'Make time to think' resonated with more Beach Runners than any other email. It's the easiest concept we've looked at... & seems to be the hardest to prioritise and do. But look where it gets you. The other thing Bill demonstrates - the power of asking for colleague input. Of teamwork. Lack of consultation cost an Aussie PM his job yesterday. Absence of team harmony, the top US military man's. Take solitude, think, but keep asking for input, and play nice.

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

A culture of one more

"It's never crowded along the extra mile."

Wayne Dyer

The easiest act in the world is to down tools. Open your fingers, gravity takes care of the rest. Fall on the couch. Slump in the chair. Stop pedaling. Stop running. The mid year point is almost here, the Beach Run rants almost done. You deserve a rest.

Or you can go one more.

One more question. One more shot. One more rock to turn over. One more call. One more client-delighting initiative. One more implementation. One more look at the daily action sheet. One more go at the discipline you've tried so hard to build this past year. One more networking contact to get in touch with. One more approach to the boss for a payrise or to fund your attendance at a tradeshow you know your best customer will be at. One more smile. One more receptionist to befriend. One more run-through with the demo product. One more internal client to recruit. One more role-play in front of the mirror. One more book to read. One more creative butchers paper session with the team. One more Beach Run reminder to try & apply. One more look at the numbers. One more shot at breaking the gap down into individual client conversations. One more look at the CRM system. One more prospect. One more Google. One more existing client to show some love. One more affirmation that there's no reason you can't be the very best supply partner in your industry (in the world). One more hour. One more goal to set for next year. One more sprint when it's hurting.

One more time.

Ussain Bolt eases up before the finish line.

You are not Ussain Bolt.

Go one more.

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

The penultimate pedal

"If you can read this, thank a teacher."

Anon.

There are three things I've loved about delivering these sales muscle stretches.

It has let me combine my passions. Writing, selling, innovating and serving.

It has nurtured a discipline. Disciplines are the bedrock on which sales and small business success is built.

And it has helped some people. On a cold lonely sales morning when no-one else was around and the thought of banging their head against the wall once more was too much, one of these notes helped someone.

There are some people that have helped me along this sandy path.

The coaching and workshop clients. The network partners. The fodder for these emails. The faithful 25+ that have breathed life into 42 MIGHTY Businesses. The grammatical nit-pickers. The feedback-givers. The grateful.

You, the Beach Runner.

Thank you for your help - for letting me do the three things I've loved. I hope that these notes have helped you in return.

(My penultimate challenge to you - *pay it forward* - go thank a loyal client for all their help today).

Have a MIGHTY sales day!

The beach run

Your daily sales muscle workout...

Cadence

"I got a little bit tired."

John Isner, winner of the world's longest tennis match.

Last week, American John Isner and Frenchman Nicolas Mahut took to court at Wimbledon, not knowing that they would go on to create history.

2 days later, after 11 hours on court, 186 games and a 5th set that ran 70 - 68, Isner fell on the ground in exhausted ecstasy, while Mahut wondered what could have been.

I've tried to imagine how it must have felt around 6 or 7 hours in, 42 games apiece, physically spent. The temptation to say *"ahh, stuff it, I'll just throw it in."*

Neither of them did. Isner on Mahut - *"The guy's a warrior."* Mahut returns - *"He's a champion."*

Digging deeper than you knew you could.

Holding your nerve longer.

Pushing forward when the temptation to quit is overwhelming.

Maintaining cadence.

Immediately after the game, Mahut was devastated. But I think he'll get the wish he tearfully shared in the press conference...

"I just want them to remember that we were just two big fighters... and one of them just won."

Now our run is done.

Thank you for letting me visit your inbox each morning this past year. I hope these sales-focused emails have helped you - I've certainly had a ball creating them. Any feedback you have would be great. For those not yet in the 42 MIGHTY Businesses tribe, I hope I can again support you down the track. And even in the absence of these early morning Blackberry pingers, I hope you keep running.

Look around you. 42 sales lessons sit right in front of your nose. They're dressed up in distracting costumes, but if you can recognise them and remove their red noses, they're just waiting to be learnt from and applied in your business for your customers and your success today.

Have a **MIGHTY** sales day, and enjoy a well deserved rest!

(because tomorrow, your business needs you running again... :-)