

BEST SALES TACTICS FOR JOB SEARCH

By John M. O'Connor, BA, MFA, CRW, CFRW, CCM, CECC
President - Career Pro Resumes and Career Pro Inc.

If you do not properly understand the art of selling you will not understand how to make your career move. It really does not matter what industry, what field, what job title you have and what vocation you have chosen. In some cases it may be that your vocation seems to have chosen you. Take Chip Stanton for example. A long time repair professional with a major copier company, Chip Stanton decided to reinvent his career.

"Call me lucky and I will have an argument with you", he says. "I used to view myself as just a tech guy, so in order to reinvent my career and make six figures plus, I had to change. Unfortunately, a lot of people believe the limits and titles they settle for. I didn't". Chip Stanton, like others who recognize a need to change, recalculated, re-branded, and reinvented himself into a person who earned six figures for years, then started his own business and retired.

What does a person like Chip Stanton, or anyone else, do to recognize his or her value? One way is to build up skills in dealing with people and the skills utilized in sales. Deb Riser, a top-flight Project Manager earning six-figures in a successful software company recently exclaimed to me: *"John, everything is sales. I worked in retail before I completed my technical training and what I learned stays with me to this day."*

What do these people know that other folks do not? They understand that sales, in its' purest sense, does not mean convincing someone to do what they do not want to do. They understand that it means learning key tenets of the finest sales practices. What are they key tenets? How do you develop these skills now? How do you identify the areas where you need more practice?

First you must recognize what skills and abilities you have currently and then the areas where you need to sharpen your sales skills regardless of your profession. Are you a CFO? An accountant focused on your spreadsheets and numbers? Believe it or not, you still need to understand and cultivate sales skills. Are you a CEO? Even if you feel you have a grasp on sales, you had better appreciate that it is also the engine that drives your organization's train? Your employees need to hone these skills too. Are you a line worker at a manufacturing plant? Developing your sales skills will help you advance in your career. These skills matter, no matter who you are or where you want to go.

To realize where you are in learning new sales skills you need to:

- Understand that good customer relations skills matter, at all levels of the organization
- Realize that communication techniques matter whether you sell, sit in a cube all day and program, even if you have very little contact with customers
- Have a comprehensive understanding of your product and/or services
- Develop communication skills so that you sell the credibility of your organization and can be a resource for anyone at any level

Who are the front line sales people in the banking business? If you said the branch managers or financial services people you would be wrong. Tellers and hourly workers in any business have some of the greatest influence on sales. Have you been through a bank lately? Tellers want you to get the Christmas Club account going. They remind you about getting second mortgage or better yet - your home equity line! That sounds better than a second mortgage. It reminds me of working for my sister in Lansing, Michigan at McDonald's when I ran the drive through or worked at the counter. It's called the *"would you like fries with that?"* sales technique. It's really called suggestive selling! Now I don't know about you but service people are the key sales people for me. I often take their credible, based in fact advice vs. a pure, card-carrying sales person. Who would you rather buy a car from or who do you trust more - a car

mechanic or a car salesperson? In my interview for this article with author and renowned sales trainer Marty Clarke, he reiterated the importance of using sales skills to advance your career, change your career or become a better sales person. The author of *Communication Land Mines: 18 Communication Catastrophes and How to Avoid Them*. He recommends three critical tips on adapting, recognizing and using proper sales for any career advancer or jobseeker:

1. **Sales Skills for All:** More and more we are learning the lesson that teams of dedicated professionals are more valuable than individual superstars who act as loners. If you seek career change or career advancement you must embrace the sales side of your life (even if you don't actually sell something) and develop relationships within high performing teams. This is the path to advancement. Now if you do not seek an aggressive career path and all you want is a job, then you can park your communication skills outside.
2. **Communication is Key:** Just because you are technical, or you have a title, or you think you are good at what you do that your career will take care of itself you are wrong. This is not true. Today's companies are looking for that magic combination of raw skill and excellent communication (leadership) skills. American business needs capable people who can also interact across departments with ease and with authority.
3. **Value Your Credibility:** Many people feel they don't need positive communication skills to be thought of as credible. This is a critical error in judgment. Worker bees are in great supply. We need leaders. We need credibility. Forget your credentials. Are you credible?
4. **Internal Interaction is Still Sales:** If you work alone, if you never interact with others in your company or never need the cooperation of others in different departments, then you do not need my help. If, however, you do interact with other staff, then you have just as much at stake as a sales person vis a vie your communication skills. If you do not work on these skills you will be consistently passed over for promotion and eventually left to yourself because you will be seen (correctly) as a socially inept drone.

A steady diet of proper training and emphasis will help anybody who does not want to be a drone! Being a drone would be bad, very bad. So what can you do to add healthy habits to your career diet whether you are seeking advancement or trying to reinvent yourself and make more money?

Decision marks the maturity of a serious career advancer. Follow these simple rules. You need to consider making decisions:

- Decide to use sales skills to career advance.
- Decide that communication skills are the hallmark of a great sales person.
- Decide to go on a reading plan. Find books on communication skills and leadership and read them.
- Decide to study sales people you admire.

Finally, remember that getting a job and keeping your career advancing is a sales activity. My strong feeling is that many of the folks I coach, who are not in sales, must know the tenets of sales to properly market themselves for positions at all levels. Marty Clarke says it this way: You are the product and the productivity/results you will bring to as a result of being hired are the benefits the employer will enjoy. You either sell those benefits or you walk. So run, don't walk. Embrace the finest sales skills into your healthy career habits.

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John M. O'Connor is the President of both divisions of Career Pro Inc. (Outplacement Excellence) and Career Pro Resumes. He is available for questions and consultations via phone at (919) 787-2400 or by email at john@careerproinc.com.

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In 2004, Mr. O'Connor became the first private practice Certified Federal Job Search Trainer (CFJST) in North Carolina. He is also a Certified Electronic Career Coach (CECC). With a unique fiction writing pedigree with fiction publications as well, he obtained a Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing from Bowling Green State University. With over 14 years experience in professional career transition, resume writing and career coaching, O'Connor applies his considerable job market expertise to career transitioners nationally.

He has been featured recently (May 2003 and May 2004 feature) in the Raleigh News & Observer, Resume Writers Digest, The Gladiator, Execunet, Career Masters Institute Monthly Newsletter, Monster Career News and other national publications such as JIST. Additionally his diversified experience includes serving as a college professor.