

SALES TOURISTS

Scott shares his story: On a hot day, I was in Florida with a partner. We were about to do a presentation to an executive team, a very big potential account at an office supply company. We fly into town and were running a half hour late when we swung into the parking lot and pulled into the visitors spot, right in front of the stylish mirrored building.

As we got out, my very agitated partner notices that his pen had leaked on his shirt. He lost his temper, shouted swear words, whipped off his suit coat, and quite literally ripped his shirt off. Fabric tearing and buttons flying, he wadded it up and fired it in the nearby bushes. Bare-chested, sweating, and swearing, he tore through his luggage, got another shirt from the trunk, put it on, adjusted his tie in the mirrored office window, and we went in.

We called at first-floor reception and were led down the hall and into an already filled conference room.

I looked over the board table of decision-makers and out the window behind them. There was our car. My partner's shirt was still stuck in the bushes. Fifteen people important to our financial futures had had a ringside view of a terrific temper tantrum.

To this day, I'm very cautious in and around parking areas—no speeding, stealing parking spaces, illegal parking, etc. I'm "on" from the moment I drive into the customer's lot.

Scott's tale points to a problem that is epidemic in the selling world today. We have too many tourists showing up, just checkin' out the career. Here's how to identify this miserable mark on our profession (you'll find a fix for them later, too).

The Sales Tourist is unprofessional in words and action. In our trade, he or she might be distastefully described as ‘amateur,’ ‘rookie,’ or worse, ‘the classic experienced 15 year rep who really has had one year of experience repeated 15 times.’ Ouch. The three reasons for this amateur behavior? This individual is probably:

- New to selling
- Poorly trained or untrained
- Not taking the job/career very seriously

I use the term “tourist” because of a speech I heard. World class speaker and founder of the Willow Creek mega church spoke of his visit to the Vietnam War Memorial in Washington, D.C.; “Watching people at that wall, you could tell the difference between the tourists and ‘investors.’ The tourists are gawking and talking at this magnificent work of art. They show little outward regard for the seriousness and significance of this monument. The investors are quiet and respectful. Many are on their knees. The names on the wall signify the ultimate investment, made by comrades and loved ones giving their lives.”

Someone who is invested in something has a different set of behaviors than a sightseer just passing through. I've never met a tourist-mentality salesperson who was any good at his or her craft.

SEND THE SALES TOURIST HOME

Are you a tourist? Do you work with a tourist? If you're an entrepreneur, do tourists work for you? Many reps don't become tourists by intention. They're often new to the sales profession. They might be experienced, but frustrated because they engage in lots of

activity and have little money to show for it. Let's take a look at a true sales pro, model his behavior, and move out of our career's tourist trap.

20 years ago I was a rookie rep just learning to sell as a headhunter. My job was to find a sales candidate to fill a job and get paid by the hiring company for filling a gap in their sales territory. I recruited a great medical sales rep for the position. John was sharp – with strong language skills, a fantastic track record and a \$1200 suit. He decided that he was going to take the job (finally, commissions for me!). My client, the hiring company, asked me to present him with his choice of a compensation package.

I was about to get shock of my newly-minted sales life. John could elect to be paid a base salary of sixty thousand dollars plus 3% commission, or no salary and a 10% commission percentage. This guy was a real pro, so what did he choose? It was straight commission—without a moment's hesitation. He told me that he could make either a hundred and fifty thousand or three hundred thousand dollars. He knew what he needed to do, every day, to earn twice the money he'd get with a safe salary. His behavior was so highly skilled and regimented that he had no fear about working without a base. Here I was with a tiny base, struggling to get my earnings up to \$45,000 and my candidate was turning down \$60,000 as a base?

Wouldn't you be wondering about the difference between John and yourself? I certainly was. In fact, I lay in bed for a few nights after that offer was accepted, wondering what this guy did that I couldn't yet do. John knew he was going to take home three hundred grand in the coming year – because he'd already done it. And John knew exactly what he had to do to perform at the highest level. \$300,000 - that's a nice payoff for paying your dues in the selling world.

This incident was enough for me to begin a journey from where I was to where he was. But first I had to find out how he got there.

From 1985 to 1995 I read books, listened to audio and attended workshops on selling. During this time I took over the management and training of 15 reps, so my learning was enhanced by my need to teach others on a daily basis (more later about how and why you should be doing this too).

You already know many of the speakers and trainers – they’re each unique – some funny and some serious. But there are quite a few common concepts you can pull from any expert.

Today we’ll focus one potent way that can keep anyone out of tourist mode and boost performance and earnings. Remember my comment that John’s behavior was so *highly skilled and regimented*? That’s the piece we want to adapt today.

WARNING: This is the work part; we’re past the fun stuff. And I’ll give you a call to action at the end, which you’ll want to use to help you put these ideas into play.

1. Define and write down what goal (translated in dollars) you want to acquire.
2. Set a time frame for acquiring your goal.
3. Pretend you’ve already gotten your hands on that goal, then *work backward* to determine what activities it would take to attain it.

Here’s a simple example of how to work backward to identify the success path toward your goal:

Your goal is to pay cash for a new Lexus SUV, which costs sixty thousand dollars. You want to be driving it within one year. Follow these sample steps to create a professional plan for your daily work activities:

- You make a five-hundred-dollar commission for each sale.
- You need a hundred and twenty sales to award yourself the car.
- This means you need ten sales each month.
- You close 20 percent of your face-to-face sales calls.
- So you need to get in front of fifty buyers a month to close those ten.
- You have twenty-five workdays each month, so you need two sales calls per day.
- If you get appointments with one of four phone contacts, you need to contact two hundred people to get your fifty appointments.
- Two hundred divided by twenty-five days = eight daily phone contacts.
- You need eight phone calls and two meetings each day to earn your sixty-thousand-dollar car.

“Come on!” you’re crying about now. “I have to do all those calculations?” Yes you do – JUST ONCE.

THEN THE NUMBERS WILL BE SITTING IN FRONT OF YOU, MOTIVATING YOU TO ATTAIN THEM.

All this activity drives your regular behavior on the job. By employing these guidelines you develop a professional attack on your marketplace.

Work through these steps with your own figures to determine your daily activity. You'll be perceived as a pro. You'll feel like a pro. You'll pay yourself like a pro.

If you run a business, decide now to ban sales tourists from your company. Interview each rep to determine what they want to earn, then help them identify their daily activity.

If you’re a rep struggling with your earnings, decide now to take the time to structure your own daily work plan, with your own numbers and get out of tourist mode.

You can develop the disciplined behavior these extraordinary earners practice every day to make great money!

Finally, go teach this to someone else. The best learners teach what they acquire as soon as possible. There is no better way to embed new learning and create accountability for your success than to share these ideas with your sales colleagues, networking group or others who are important to your success. So your last question is this:

Who will you share this with, today?