

Sales Tip Sheet 5 –The 10 Reasons Sales Are Lost

1. **Lack of planning** by the sales person from the outset; this includes understanding the market, customers and competitors as well as adequately planning territory coverage and allocation of time. Every successful sales person has a plan, with clear objectives, actions and key milestones to be achieved.
2. **Lack of preparation** (for the call or visit) –e.g. setting clear objectives, writing down the best questions, thinking how to handle likely objections and even remembering to take the right samples and brochures! The best sales people never just turn up and 'wing it'. Develop a simple checklist for every call.
3. **Lack of time**, often stemming from the above two points. Many sales people operate in a reactive mode, where everything is urgent and important. Learn to prioritise and understand which 20% of your activities will give you 80% of your business.
4. **Not meeting with decision makers**. Too many people waste time with people who either do not have the decision-making authority or are not really interested in your products / services. Learn to qualify prospects early on in the sales cycle.
5. **Using 'lazy' questions** –So many sales people use the same standard questions, including many closed ones! Plan questions for each and every call and practise asking only good quality open questions with a colleague or family member.
6. **Not listening!!** It so easy, in the heat of the moment, to forget to listen to what the customer is saying –really saying. Test your listening skills with your partner; you may not be as good as you think you are!
7. **Presenting features instead of benefits**. So many sales brochures are feature driven and even when we remember to sell benefits are we matching them to the needs of our potential customers?
8. **Lack of passion in the selling process** –if you're not passionate about what you're selling, how do you expect your prospects to be?
9. **Forgetting to close or gain commitment to the next step**. This is not just about asking for the order; it may be as simple as booking the next meeting whilst you're still with the customer. Always identify the next step in the sales process.
10. **Failing to look after the customer!** You get the first order and then what? Proactive after sales care is vital to the health of an account.