

**GREAT SALESPEOPLE
AREN'T BORN,
THEY'RE
HIRED**

*The Secrets to Hiring Top Sales
Professionals*

Joe Miller & Patrick Longo

Edited by Patrick Longo

**W Business
Books**

an imprint of New Win Publishing
a division of Academic Learning Company

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Published by WBusiness Books,
an imprint of New Win Publishing,
a division of Academic Learning Company, LLC
9682 Telstar Ave. Suite 110, El Monte, CA 91731
www.WBusinessBooks.com

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ISBN: 0-8329-5000-9
Library of Congress Control Number 2005920993
Manufactured in the United States of America
09 08 07 06 05 1 2 3 4 5

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AUTHOR'S FOREWORD

As a storyteller, I love to surround myself with people who love to tell stories. Some of my best “material” has been “inspired” by other people and the brilliant stories they love to tell. I did not wake up one day and decide I wanted to write professional self-help books. In the game of sales, it seems that many of our stories aren’t written down for any reason. It’s more of an oral history that gets passed down from salesperson to salesperson, father to son, mother to daughter, and back into the sales world. We pick up where the last person left off.

Believe me, I don’t think there is anything wrong with this. Truly, I understand that our history contains much more than a bunch of ruffled farts shooting the crap over scotch or coffee (not necessarily in that order). Or even a prolific salesperson using great fact and fiction to help uncover a customer’s pain. True, honest, ethical salespeople have relayed to me some of the most meaningful stories I have ever heard, and I am sincerely grateful for that. In turn, I have come clean more often in my life because I have had good salespeople and sales managers who were there to listen. Hmm. That Holy Grail of sales: being able to listen.

In some of the next several hours of your life, I am going to ask you to do one thing: listen. I have had friends who wanted to write songs, friends who wanted to write fiction, friends who wanted to write screenplays, etc. All of those genres do a fantastic job of relaying, passing down and conveying the human story, the universal spirit in all of us, no matter what country you come from, or what kind of life you lead or have lead. Stories go beyond death. Not many of us have enough influence in our professional life to go beyond death, unless we rise to a whole new level.

I must admit that other genres can be more entertaining than the professional self-help genre, but the story you are about to hear is about life. Your life. My life. And the lives of millions of people out there just like us. This

is not a story about my first love, my first heartache, or how I finally got the nerve to beat up the neighborhood bully. This is about my love for this profession and the need to help perpetuate the true notion that you must give in order to receive.

As salespeople, or people who deal with salespeople on a daily basis, we spend each working day uncovering other people's pain. We aim to help and we aim to please and, through it all, make money. Therefore, we clearly hope and aim to be rewarded for helping others. At this point, however, it's time we uncovered some of our own pain: the pain in the ass we call "hiring and firing." I'm going to ask you to turn your sensitivity meter down. I am going to become the neighborhood bully. I'm going to make fun of you until you push back and do something about your number one freaking problem: hiring and retaining great salespeople.

Like me, a friend of mine believes that you need to visualize your goal in order to reach it. You also need to write it down. This is why he has had his Academy Award speech written down and stuffed in his wallet since the third grade. In it, he has reserved a space where he thanks all of his teachers, especially the crappy ones. Why? Because he learned as much from them as he did from the good ones. He also goes on to thank all of his ex-girlfriends. And should he have the misfortune of going through a divorce before he wins his award or awards (believe me, he will win at least one), he'll probably thank his ex-wife and her attorney as well.

My Academy Award speech is this foreword. I'd like to thank everyone and everything. I'd like to thank the people who are going to publish this book. I'd like to thank the people who never considered publishing this book. I'd like to thank the prospects that turn me down every day. Most of all, I'd like to thank you for taking the verbal fanny spanking you are about to receive. And hopefully, one day you will thank me, somewhere, in a speech for being such a great inspiration... either as (a) informational saint or (b) full-of-crap schmuck. If we truly live in a true/false world, then either "a" or "b" will help you find and uncover *the truth*.

J.M.
12/5/04

CHAPTER 1

COMING CLEAN

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COMING CLEAN

When I look back on my life in sales, each chapter of my career seems as though it could be a chapter in a book. Sometimes, I even feel as though one chapter in this book could constitute its own book. However, when I approached a friend with the idea of actually writing this book, I realized that my career really came down to three phases: sales, sales training, and sales recruiting. Perhaps I felt compelled to start with sales recruiting because it is the latest chapter in a rewarding sales career and in some ways may be the most difficult phase to talk about or teach in the traditional sense. In this chapter, you will understand why.

Just as my career at this point in the game could be boiled down to three phases, so could the basic ingredients for this book. The basic ingredients of this book can be traced back to three distinct things, and represent the following: a sales recruiting manual I developed, telltale experiences I had in the sales recruiting business, and an intense desire to help other people avoid the mistakes I have made.

I am not a writer. I am a salesperson. I spend the majority of my time doing what I do, not writing it down. If I am not doing it, I am speaking about it. In the process of trying to write this down so I could share my experiences with others in a more concrete format, I realized that writing and speaking are two very different monsters. Speaking and writing (listening and reading) cater to two very different learning styles and, according to some, use different parts of the brain. So it is no shock that what I ended up with is a very colloquial, sometimes gritty style for much of this book. My goal is to speak *to* you, not *at* you.

I hope for the most part this “style” reveals my experience as a trainer,

because what we learn from teaching is invaluable, and in turn makes us better teachers. Much of this book is culled from recordings I made of my training (“teaching”) sessions. Hearing myself on audiotape and looking at the original transcription both intrigued and amused me, because the man I heard was different from the man I saw in my own head, and vice versa. It’s important to keep this in mind while reading this book, because how you see yourself and how others see you may be two completely different things. In fact, that’s a guarantee. The discrepancy might be a little and it might be almost unbearable. That’s why I call this chapter “coming clean.”

One of the best ways to judge yourself is to watch yourself on video. Listening to and watching one’s self on video can be very humbling and, in some cases, humiliating. It also can be refreshing. You catch your mistakes, but you also catch a glimpse of your own shine. Most importantly you realize there is plenty of room to grow. And growth is always what we’re looking for in life and in business. At least that’s my belief, and I’m 99.44% sure it’s your belief as well, or you wouldn’t be caught dead paying for this book, much less taking the time to read it.

Salespeople are among the top 10% of income earners in this country, and you are charged with the task of hiring salespeople. As a side note, it’s amazing to me that the people who spend money on self or professional improvement often don’t need it and the people who need it don’t do anything for their own improvement. Through the secrets in this book, you can improve and/or make more money. One or both will and can make you happy depending on your definition of “happy!”

How many of us have watched a great sporting event and thought, “I can do that?” It’s what makes the great ones “great.” They make it look so easy that they make us believe we can rise to the same heights and glory, as if these “powers” were inherent or had been granted at birth. It’s an illusion. Think Houdini. Think Copperfield. They got where they were, at the height of their powers, through persistence, curiosity, and hard work. The glory came later, and at this point I am sure you are ready for the glory.

Rising to the heights of sales is not always glorious, and each person’s definition of “glory” will be the main determinant to whether or not any one person sees himself or herself as happy, gratified, or successful. It’s not just about the money. It’s so much more. If it’s just about money, then you’ve already lived “half a death.” What you give to get money without regard

for your life will take away nearly all or more than it can give.

I know we are taught to be weary of a person who says, “Trust me,” but if I could, without making you weary of me in the opening paragraphs of my book, I would say, “Trust me.” In fact, I’ll say it, say it loud and tell you to eat it. The years in my life when I was making more money were not necessarily my happiest years. Some of those years were littered with bad judgment and bad behaviors that nearly sank me, yet these were crucial errors that helped me decide where I wanted to be in my life. They taught me who to trust, when to use my instinct, and when to use my head. They taught me as much about family as they did about business, even though I always considered myself a “family guy.” There are places in life to gamble and places where you should use pure logic. I know it’s logical to hire great salespeople to limit your pain. Gambles are different than risks.

I have always risked a lot, but also gambled. My past, in many ways, yielded more opportunities through setbacks (gambles) than successes. But this kind of success only comes from learning: learning through mistakes. If you do not learn, you just go further down the hole, and somewhere along the line, you can only hope to learn there’s a madness that must end. One of the greatest gambles you can make is to resist change, to just sit there and think that things will magically turn for the better if you leave things as they are. Anyone who says, “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it” most likely doesn’t have a personal definition of “broken.”

In my life, the opportunities given through risk were greater, more challenging, and more rewarding than anything else in life. Risks can be calculated and bring less pain than gambles. After watching the movie *Wall Street*, I realized that greed indeed is good to a point, but when taken to the extreme it will bite you. It’s piggish and unnecessary because there is plenty to go around. Unfortunately, more often than not, greed bites the little man, the struggling person, and the person who can’t recover as quickly from the consequences as someone who has a little insurance, so to speak. Greed often affects people who are not greedy. Believe me, this is not a manifesto, but a slight warning from a little guy who thinks big. I’m 5’9” but not Napoleonic.

I don’t want to get too Zen on a bunch of salespeople, but in the past years I also learned how the simple act of giving can bring each one of us success in our own lives. If life is all about me, how can I expect to *get* anything in

life? What do I have to compare it to? Who do I have to share it with? Everything is reciprocal, and the more honest I can be as a salesperson, the more honest I can be as a person. Remember there is a “person” in salesperson. That is why I can honestly say I would never sell a person something they truly did not need. I would never hire a person I did not need. And I would never fire a person simply because I did not “need” them. I call on myself to be responsible and find or create a job in my company that will utilize a person’s skills to generate revenue.

That’s why this book is not about training. Real growth is new business, not cooking the old books and calling it new stew! If you are truly hiring for talent, you can always use that person in some way, but salespeople are not necessarily professionals you would want to retrain for a different position. You may just need to find more creative ways to utilize the talent they possess for their current profession. It takes hard work, so start with the talent that you hired them for; but if it’s a losing proposition, own up to it and let them go.



Remember: in your business stew, good salespeople are the most effective ingredient.

Every person in a company has a purpose or they wouldn’t be there. If they are not doing their job you can fire their ass, but only after you’ve given them an opportunity to change their ways. It may simply be that you screwed up and hired the wrong person. Or maybe you unconsciously hired them for another position. In either of these case scenarios, *they* should be giving *you* a chance to change your ways, or you should efficiently help them find their stride in your company. Otherwise, improve yourself or step up to the plate, take a deep breath, and fire yourself! Yes. Fire yourself. Go where your true talents are useful. There’s nothing shameful in that. Come clean.

If a good salesperson is not doing well in your company, is that necessarily their fault? It may well be, but the easiest thing you could do is give up... and fire their ass! That may mean *you* are weak. Or lazy, or... Is that too harsh? If so, you may want to close the cover and take this book right back to the bookstore and ask for your money back. Make sure you tell them why you didn’t like the book. Really. Is it because the language is too harsh or because the weakness starts with you? Come clean. Maybe this is a management problem, but what we are talking about here is what we refer to as

a hiring problem.

Admitting weakness is one of the strongest things a person can do. Admitting weakness in your company may be admitting you're weak, a double negative for which most people do not wish to take credit. That's understandable, but if each person cannot see their own weakness, you're going to be leaving the decisions in the hands of everyone above you in the company. If you're at the top at this moment in your life and business career, you're automatically yelling "Scapegoat!" Most of us don't have the luxury. Finding a scapegoat is one of the greatest acts of weakness available to management.

It may be true that indeed one must become a great salesperson in order to learn how to hire a great salesperson, but if you truly have both the company and the salesperson's interests laid out on the table, from the beginning, you shouldn't have to be a great salesperson. You can save both parties a lot of time, energy, money, and even a little (dare I say it?) heartbreak if you simply know what you are looking for in a great salesperson.

Anyone with a wee-bit of instinct, a pure method (provided here, thank you), and the curiosity and drive of a true professional can hire great salespeople. No, you don't necessarily have to be a good salesperson, but you definitely should know one. And, of course, you should be able to communicate effectively with the people who ultimately make the hiring decisions. In this case, it should be you. If not, then you should consider using your influence to correct the mistakes of the people who have the true influence, the real decision maker in your company. That's a bold step and I thank you for it. That, too, is hard work and can be a little unnerving.

So this book really is about coming clean and committing yourself to a true process where none exists. Or changing a process that clearly does not work. Get to know yourself. Getting to know oneself is the key to knowing how to hire someone else. Getting to know yourself is the key to influencing someone else. Getting to know yourself is the key to fixing something that is broken. Getting to know yourself is the key to understanding when you have succeeded. And finally, it is the key to keeping strong and consistent in the present and the future, which should span your entire career.

As with sales, we need to uncover what's broken if we are to successfully hire the best of the best. I assume it is the *method* or *process* you use for

hiring and retaining great salespeople. If you do not know who you are and what you truly want, you are going to lead good people down a wasteful, hurtful, needless path in their life. And yours! And your company's! Although later I will talk about the ability to not take things personally in sales, leading a person on in any situation in life is uncalled for because it is unnecessary if all involved are honest about their intentions.

Unfortunately, our main barrier as human beings is that most of us do not know our intentions because we rarely look inward enough to understand ourselves. It is unfortunate that this becomes a trickle-down situation. If we don't get to know ourselves, how can we know our company? Our clients? Our prospects? Or the forest for the trees? I'm not talking about depth psychology here, just a basic self-knowledge and the need for a true process that helps reveal what we truly want when we aim to hire.

Carl Jung once stated, "It is, unfortunately, only too clear that if the individual is not truly regenerated in spirit, society cannot be either, for society is the sum total of individuals in need of redemption." If we take this quote and replace "individual" with "salesperson" and "society" with "business," you can see that the individual makes a company what it is at any moment in its life cycle. This is why I highly suggest throughout this book that a company get to know what it is looking for before it decides to hire individuals, who in many ways might be there just to make a buck. A mutual, natural distrust between management and staff only fuels this attitude, and it is wasteful and needless. You might want a salesperson that is "all about the money." That's fine if that is what you want, and you have actually thought about why this personality is good for your company.

In the past, I let greed fuel some of my decisions, and it gave me nothing but the unique opportunity to learn from my mistakes. If you consider me as "lucky" for coming to this conclusion or epiphany, then I can see we have a lot of work to do. It is only lucky if you have no stake or true investment in your actions and your control over your life, which includes work. More than half our waking days consist of work and/or preparing for work. This is a very large investment, to say the least. Taking responsibility for that time will consistently open new doors. I guarantee it.

If you and your company are not likely to learn from your or its mistakes, then you need to approach this more carefully than others. Some companies cannot afford mistakes. Anheuser-Busch can afford mistakes! SONY

can make mistakes. Salespeople can make mistakes, *but if you hire bad salespeople, you may be making the greatest mistake of all.* Let's make it clear:



1. With great salespeople and bad marketing, a company can still survive.
2. With good salespeople and bad marketing, a company may survive.
3. With bad salespeople and good marketing, a company will not survive.

So what makes a good salesperson? Much of that is determined by the company the salesperson works for day to day, year after year. And yes, I do mean that the manner in which you run your company can and will help determine a salesperson's success. How many salespeople do you think do not make it through the first year in a bad company? I wish I had the statistics, though I'm sure they're out there somewhere. The answer, of course, is too many!

When looking at the sales game and how we determine who makes a good salesperson, we may (see: "should" and "have to") have to look at ourselves and figure out who we are, where we are, and where we want to go. Anyone making a hiring or firing decision must be aware of the company's direction, their personal management styles, and perhaps their own personal definition of success. That is why this book became so much a part of me, because the game of sales really is about me, and you, and anyone else who has the courage to pick up a book in order to better themselves, their salespeople, and the outside salespeople that affect your slice of the worldwide business pie. And by outside, I mean your competition!

Before you read the rest of the book, I have one disclaimer. I am from the school of low-tech. You won't find Ph.D. or any other letters next to my name. The closest thing to an educational title you will see next to my name is perhaps a sentence such as, "*Joe Miller's Dv.D.* player broke in the summer of 2002 when he tripped over his daughter's dollhouse and smashed his head against a VCR in his failed attempt to switch off MTV and play *Dumbo* for his son." What you will find, however, is honest-to-goodness real-world experience, failures and successes that are all related to hiring salespeople. So now that we're one step closer to coming clean, let's get down to business by reading this book: part seminar transcript, part manual, and mostly... experience.