



WOLF SALES TRAINING

WOLFSALESTRAINING.COM

REASONS SALESPEOPLE FAIL AT “NEW” BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

- Don't have the know-how or experience
- They're always waiting on the company
- They are prisoners of HOPE
- They cannot tell the story **hint hint**
- Ill-targeted and lacking determination
- They're late to the party
- Discouraged and cynical
- Poor phone efforts
- They are unpleasant
- Inefficient in sales meetings
- Love to babysit existing accounts
- Concentrating on the wrong part of sales
- No individualized sales process
- Don't secure their calendar
- They begin to stagnate
- They are not made for sales

The Wolf Sales Model

Chapter 2: The Hunt

The next morning, I woke to the smell of coffee brewing. I found Pops in the kitchen, where he was brewing coffee in an old tin percolator. The smell was amazing. As I sat down at the hardwood kitchen table, he began throwing bacon into a cast iron frying pan.

“After breakfast,” he said, “I’m going to fill this sink full of nice, hot, soapy water, and then I’m going to wash this cast iron,” he said, indicating the frying pan and its sizzling contents. “Unless you think it should go in the dishwasher I don’t have?”

My mouth must have fallen open. Finally, I managed to say, “But... I thought-”

“Good,” he said, taking mercy on me. “You aren’t hopeless after all.”

He’d been testing me. Years ago, he’d taught me that you seasoned a cast iron pan, then wipe it out when you’re done with it... But you never, ever run it through the dishwasher or otherwise completely clean it. He wanted to see if I had hung on to any of the lore he’d given me when I was younger.

Pops used a fork to adjust the position of a piece of bacon in the pan, then put the fork and bacon on a plate on the countertop next to the stove. Everything about this place was as rustic as rustic got. It seemed fitting for Pops, who was my very definition of “old school”. There really was something about his generation that was a little different... And now, here I was, hoping that I could tap into that, learn from it, in order to pull myself out of this hold I had dug myself into.

“I can see it on your face when you do that,” Pops said. He began taking finished strips of bacon and placing them in a folded paper towel, which he had layered on the plate.

“Do what?” I asked.

“Fall into yourself,” he said. “You’re a good kid, Jason,” he added. “You always have been. But I can see you start to fold up inside. Doubt. Doubt is a powerful tool, Jason, but if you let it run wild, it will drag you down with it. People out there,” he gestured with his fork to the kitchen window, a way of vaguely indicating all of the rest of the world, “they’ll drag you down too, and you won’t even know it. Doubt is dragging around what other people think, just as much as your own fears.”

Chapter 2: The Hunt

He brought the bacon over, as well as some toast he'd already made, then poured us two cups of coffee in white porcelain mugs. I drank the coffee gratefully.

"It's awfully early to get so deep, Pops," I said.

"Is it?" He said. "I've been up for a while." He'd always been an early riser. I remember during visits when I was a kid, he always seemed to think I was wasting the day if I slept in past six in the morning. These days I was much more of an early riser, but while in this funk, this rut... I'd been having trouble getting out of bed in the morning.

He read it on my face again. "You think you're wrong," he said simply.

I finished the too-hot-to-swallow coffee I had in my mouth. "Uh... what?" I said.

"Jason, I told you I was going to teach you about wolves. But do you know what the lesson of wolves is?"

I shook my head. "No, I don't guess I do."

"The lesson is that people are wrong. They're wrong about wolves. Have been for years. Wolves are complex, social creatures. They don't have an 'alpha'. That hierarchy and dominance stuff, that's what wolves do in captivity, denied their natural environment. In the wild, wolves are all about family- about protecting each other and making sure the family has what it needs. Tell me that isn't you."

I swallowed hard. Not selling... being in this slump... there it was. I was constantly worried about not being able to provide. It wasn't about failure, for me, on a personal level. It was nice to win sales awards, back when I did... But that wasn't why I sold. Success meant providing for my family. Money meant food on the table and a roof over our heads. Closing meant keeping my job so I had the stability that provided those things, not just for a day or a week, but for years at a time.

"That's it," Pops nodded. He'd seen some twinkling in my eye, some measure of what I must have been thinking. He really could read me like a book. "You think you're wrong. You think your approach to selling is wrong, and that makes you doubt, and that doubt makes you think you're a failure. And failures don't go out and sell, do they?"

"I guess not," I said.

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“Which means you’ve been folding up on yourself all this time, listening to those doubts, telling yourself you’re wrong and you don’t know why, expecting to fail. We expect the wolves to behave like they do in captivity... but in the wild, they’re different creatures. Well, you’ve become a creature in captivity, Jason. You need to think about your family, not doubt yourself.”

“I, uh...” I started. “Okay,” I finally managed.

This had gotten a lot more personal than I was expecting. I had pictured asking him about tips and tricks, “old school” sales techniques. I hadn’t expected to feel like I was lying on some rustic psychologist’s couch.

“When I took you out there last night, to hear the wolves, to sit by the fire the way our ancestors did, what were we doing?” Pops put a piece of bacon in his mouth and chewed thoughtfully, his eyes never leaving mine. It was like he was daring me to start wool-gathering again.

“Uh... listening?” I said.

“Do better,” he said, shaking his head. “More specific.”

“Listening to the wolves,” I said.

“Listening to the land,” he said, nodding. “Getting the lay of the land. Scoping it out. Do you think I’ve hung on to this place all these years by hiding inside the house? I’m constantly out there, surveying, learning, listening. You might say I’m prospecting. You’ve got to prospect before you can hunt, Jason.”

“Like... panning for gold?”

He laughed at that and took a long drink from his mug. Putting it down, he said, “It’s a lot more like that than you think. When we prospect, we’re laying the foundation for the hunt. When we’re going to hunt, what we’re going to hunt. You’d be surprised how all those fancy sales models forget that. They leave it out.”

“But that’s not true,” I said. “We qualify leads. We categorize prospects. There’s research and background and--”

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“But are you out there?” he said, sweeping his hand at the window again. “Are you in the middle of it, listening to the wolves? Are you listening to what other people tell you, as they describe what wolves sound and act like?”

I stopped talking and shook my head. He had me there.

“Look, Jason, you know as well as I do,” he said, taking another long swallow of coffee, “there’s a bunch of different sales models. On one end you’ve got the relationship model. Way at the other end, you’ve got the hard-sell, the challenger model. The kind of thing you see in Glengarry Glen Ross, and nonsense like that. People will watch that movie and think all they’ve got to do to sell is yell at people hard enough and long enough. ‘Always be closing’, right?”

“But there’s more to it than that. You’ve got to be more aggressive, but not a bully. You’ve got to become the predator, not in a bad way, but in the way the wolves are. You’re not a salesman, you’re a wolf. You’re not a seller, you’re a hunter.”

“So I need to stop trying to build relationships and start... hunting?”

“It’s not either-or,” he cautioned. “Thinking like a hunter means putting things in the right order, to start with. We prospect. We listen. If you want to hunt, you first have to decide where you’re going to hunt. What are you hunting when you get there? It isn’t enough to know just the area. It isn’t enough to know just the ‘animal’ you’re hunting. They have to go together. It has to be the right prey in the right place at the right time. That’s qualifying your leads by listening to the wolves- by getting the lay of the land.”

“So I don’t just want prey,” I said. “I want... prey I’ve qualified.”

“You want the perfect prey,” he said. “The ideal client.”

“I’m not sure I understand,” I said.

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“Your ideal client changes as you listen,” he said. “That’s why the lay of the land is so important. Say we’re hunting coyotes. Say those coyotes prefer to eat rabbits. Well, there will be seasons when there are a lot of rabbits, and when there are a lot of rabbits, there are a lot of coyotes. But when times get leaner, when the weather cycle or anything else that affects the prey, makes the number of rabbits smaller... the number of coyotes shrinks. The ones that starve and die off, well, they’re the ones we couldn’t close. The ones that learn how to change their stalking, attacking, and killing- their closing- are the ones who survive, even in lean times.”

He paused and finished his coffee, then ate another slice of bacon and took a bite out of his now-cold toast. “Jason, any idiot can sell when there’s a lot of rabbits. When times are good and people have money coming out of their ears, they’ll buy just about anything, and a lot of it. But when times get lean, that’s when our skills as hunters come into play. You’ve got to be able to stalk that prospect. You’ve got to be able to hunt him down and take him- close the deal with him. That’s what smart wolves do. In our example, that’s what smart coyotes do. And that’s what you’ll do when you learn to think like a wolf. “

He had me. I was excited now. “So what’s the first step?” I asked. “Where do we begin?”

“We begin,” he said, “by going fishing.”