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By Carl Davidson

We Ought to Be Committed

We ought to be committed. No, that isn't a comment on our mental stability but rather a comment addressing the fact that we ought to be totally committed to success if we intend to achieve it. After all, our degree of success at selling or managing our business is what largely determines the material quality of our life.

How much we earn is important, but how much effort do we spend on trying to earn more? We all say, "We work our back ends off," but do we really make being a success at our careers as high a priority as we should? Most of us work hard on things in which we are interested and do several things to get better at things that appeal to us. Let's look at how your commitment to your career compares with many people's commitments to hobbies and other interests.

Research

Bob is into computers. He gets several catalogs every month, which describe new products. He reads articles on the Web about new products and new techniques for programming and surfing the Web. He takes pride in the fact that he is extremely knowledgeable on anything new, and he spends hours keeping up on the latest developments. Everyone knows that if they want to get the real story, they can call Bob.

If we were as committed to our career in sales as Bob is to his hobby, we would put aside significant time to research our product and selling techniques. Notice Bob does his research without getting paid for it. If we were committed, we would do research about selling, water and the environment on our own time without being paid in order to reap the rewards later. How much effort have you put into research for your product, company and selling techniques in the last three months? If it is less than 16 hours per month, you may ask yourself if you really are committed to being a success.

We suggest you might consider using services such as Amazon.com to find the latest books on water, pollution and sales. Just typing in "filtration" brings up 196 books you may not have read. Keying in "sales" brings up 5,297 books on improving techniques. If we were committed, we might want to be engaged in research about the topics that help us make a

better living. Would you still use your doctor if you found out he did as little to keep up on new developments as you do? Scary, isn't it?

Association With Winners

Jason is a fanatic about restoring 1950 model automobiles. He goes to all the big shows and always makes sure he talks with the best restorers to pick up tips and sources of new parts. He says he never fails to learn something new at every meeting as long as he associates with the people who are tops in their field.

Jason is struggling with his selling career. If only he was as committed to it as he is to restoring automobiles. At work, he associates with non-winners: the people who just aren't making it. They spend time getting each other down by talking about the company, rumors, the ones-that-got-away, etc. By the time Jason goes out to do a demo, he isn't surprised if they say "no." If only he associated with winners at his company and winners in the sales profession in general, he would be as successful at selling. How much more would Jason make if he spent time "learning something every day" from winners in sales who make big money and are successful?

Practice

Dick loves deer hunting and takes pride in the fact that he consistently bags one or two each season. He deserves it. After all, he and the boys practice shooting once a month all year round. Two months before the hunt, they use detailed maps to decide where to build their stands and where to hunt. The month before, they practice walking the area and try to guess where the deer will be and how best to approach them. All that practice has made him tops as a hunter.

Too bad Dick doesn't make a living as a hunter. If he did, his family might be better off. You see, Dick sells for a living but he likes to "shoot from the hip." He never works on his presentation because he likes to be spontaneous. He never plans where or how to meet new prospects because he feels the company should provide them. Worst of all, he is using the same selling points, the same two closes and the same approach to objections that he learned 18 years ago when he got into the business. Too bad he isn't as committed to his

career as he is to hunting. He could be as great a salesperson as he is a hunter.

If we were committed to selling, we would practice our prospecting and presenting and compare our techniques and share ideas with other winners. We might role play and practice closing so we are confident when we need to close. Most of all, we could practice overcoming objections and form a club where we meet once a month for "target practice," go over the objections we couldn't overcome and try to sharpen our skills.

Planning

Stephanie loves history. She and her spouse have been planning a trip to Egypt for five years. They set out a plan for saving the money. They planned where they will stop and what they will see. Even though it's not happening for five years, they adjust the plan as new archaeological digs are started. They know what they want, and they intend to get it.

It's good to plan and set goals. Too bad Stephanie, a water equipment salesperson, has no plan for her career. Studies have shown that people who make written plans for how much they intend to make; how many calls they will do; and how many they will close each year, month, week and day earn far more than those who don't.

If your career is important and your earnings are too, we suggest you make a written commitment to yourself. Start with how much you want to earn now, in three years and five years. Then decide how many demos you need to do and how many phone calls you need to make every year, month, week and day to accomplish your goal. It puts you under a bit of pressure every day to achieve and that pressure will make your goals a reality.

If we were really committed to success, it is amazing what we could accomplish. My personal written goal from three years ago says I will increase my earning this year by a specific dollar figure. I am on track. I am working harder than ever but I am accomplishing more. Make a written commitment to your career. It's the first step in making it take off.

Equipment

Frank loves golf. After a lot of research, Frank decided to treat himself to the very

best clubs and balls available. After all, you can't win without the best tools. It was a big investment, but for many years Frank will have a little edge every time he plays. Frank is committed to golf.

Frank also is in sales. He hasn't changed anything in many years. His sales kit still has articles about the environment from 10 years ago. His kit has some broken items and looks a bit scruffy. He could get a computer for research and for prospecting that could send out 100 letters per day to get more appointments but it seems like a lot of money and a lot to learn. If only Frank was as committed to being a selling success as he is to golf, he'd be a manager or own his own business today.

What's the point? It's great to be passionate about a hobby or a vocation. It's relaxing and useful. My point is that if we really were committed to being the very best at our career, if we spent as much effort on research, education, practice, tools and goals as we do on hobbies, we would be bigger successes than we can imagine.

Your degree of success is extremely important to you. The more you sell, not only do you make more and increase your value to your company, but the more confident you are on that next call. Success in selling leads to success. Have you ever had a hot streak where you could do no wrong and sold everyone you tried? That wasn't luck! That was having extra confidence in yourself because you had been successful the last few times you tried.

It's great to be good at golf or hunting but wouldn't you enjoy having more money than you could spend? Imagine if you were so confident in your ability that you couldn't wait to get to work. Imagine if everyone in the business admired you as being the best. That could have happened to all the people in our examples if only they had been as committed to their chosen profession as they were to their hobby. Poet Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "A man becomes what he thinks about most." What will you become? Will it be a top salesperson or manager? It will happen only if you are committed. **WQP**

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