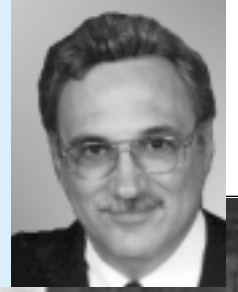


By Carl Davidson

**About the Author**

Carl Davidson is president of Sales & Management Solutions, Inc., a company that specializes in training, recruiting and consulting for the water equipment industry. For more than 20 years, 4,000 companies in seven counties have used its services to increase sales and profits.

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# Top 10 Signs

## Your Sales Career is Dying

All of nature has its cycles of birth, maturity and death. Just as spring becomes summer and finally turns to winter, so we salespeople have a cycle of growth and death. Luckily, we can, through hard work and ambition, stay at our peak for many years. Here are the top 10 signs I have noticed over the years that are warnings your productivity as a salesperson is waning. I put them before you, not to be critical, but in the hope that recognizing the early warning signs may help you stay on top of your game for years to come.

**'I Close 90 Percent of the People I Demo.'**

If you close a very high percentage of the people you demo, it means one of two things. First, it could mean you are one of the greatest closers of all time. More often, it means you have stopped prospecting. If you are selling only the people who call in and say something such as, "The softener

we bought from your grandfather broke, can you bring out a new one?" then you are closing a very high percentage. Most people who prospect close about 33 percent. If you close a very high percentage it probably means you have stopped prospecting and that is the beginning of the end of your sales career.

**'I Haven't Changed My Demo in Five Years.'**

The market is changing, the product is changing and society is changing. If you are not evolving as well, you are on your way to becoming a dinosaur. Remember too that the demo works best when it is fun for you and the customer. Changing your demo keeps you fresh and interesting. Try

adding new items to your demo every week or two. Keep the things that work and take out the things that don't.

**'I Don't Have Time for New Articles.'**

If your kit and conversation are based on old information, your demo isn't effective. Every day new articles come out about water, the environment and health. You and your customers will not be excited unless the information you are using is fresh, local and interesting. As a minimum, I suggest you carry the current

edition of your state's guide to how much fish they recommend people eat, the current EPA report on your area (get it at [www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov)) and articles about your local area. These easily are obtained on the Internet at no cost with just a few minutes work. The next time a couple says they just aren't interested, remember that part of our job is to make them interested, not find them that way.

**'My Company Really Is Slipping.'**

Remember how excited you were about getting a position at your company? Ah, yes. It was love, and you had high hopes. If you feel now that your company is slipping, your career is almost over. The day we feel our company is run by fools who are making mistakes, our service department is all incompetents and our

advertising stinks, it is time to resell ourselves or find a new job. You cannot sell if you really do not feel your company and products are the best there is.

**'Same Old Valve, Same Old Resin.'**

If you close 33 percent of the people you demonstrate to, 67 percent turn you down. After years of this kind of rejection, many of us start to lose sight of the great features the products we sell actually have. Try this test. Write out 10 great advantages your customers get from your products. Then

write out 10 advantages they get from your company and 10 they get from dealing with you. If you have trouble doing this and using these advantages in your demo, your career is slipping.

**'I Didn't Have a Chance. The Guy Was Over 60.'**

Many of us start to believe that certain groups will not buy. Maybe it is people over 60 or engineers or people in a certain neighborhood or people who call during December. Once this trend sets in, it spreads to more and more groups until we have an excuse to blame

everyone but ourselves for our failure to sell and even to prospect. Remember, when you started in this business you believed everyone would buy your products. Take an honest look at the groups you now believe will not buy. The greater the number of groups, the more your sales are slipping.

### 'It All Comes Down to Price.'



started to believe you lose sales due to the price your competitors charge, you have dark lonely clouds on the horizon of your career.

Once we convince ourselves that people buy for price and not value, our career is on a slippery slope. You see, we can always blame price—it is something we cannot control. We do, however, control the perception of value. Building value can overcome any price challenges. If you have

### 'I Don't Want to Be Pushy'



guide them to a correct decision or they would not call

“I do not push people. I tell them about it, and then I let them make up their mind.” That sentiment means the eventual end of your career in selling. You see, when you truly believe in your company, product and yourself, you want your customers to make the right decision. Your customers want you to

you. If you know they need it, you owe it to them to get the right product from the right company—that's you!

### 'They Will Buy Next Week.'

Many times at my seminars, a person will call out from the audience that they get all their customers on



a second or third call. I realize that we all get some, but the more you let your mind focus on this fact, the more driving you do and the less selling you do. If you agree the purpose of a demonstration is to get the customer excited enough to buy, they will never be more ready than they are at the end

### 'I Know More About This Equipment Than Anyone Else on Earth.'

Isn't it interesting that the more we know about water equipment, the less we sometimes sell? You used to sell just from excitement and belief in the product. Many of us get so hung up in the intricate knowledge of water and equipment it hurts our sales. Last week, I met a salesperson whose sales have fallen off lately. In our discussion, he told me what was bothering him. The thing that concerned him was so technical in nature



day you start talking about the shape of the resin or which area of the country it came from instead of how soft their skin will be, you have started to sell your impressive knowledge of facts instead of equipment.

Watch for these warning signs and avoid them. Most can be solved by selling yourself every day on how great the products we sell and the companies we work with are. Get recharged, get enthused and your career will last as long as you can carry a kit. **WQP**

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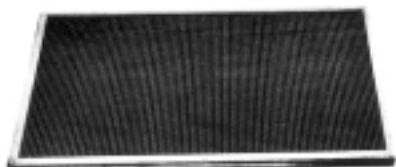


#### Stainless Steel Transmitter

The single-float, two-wire LV50 series transmitter continuously monitors liquid levels with a proportional 4–20 mA signal output. Constructed of 316 stainless steel for use with a full range of chemically compatible liquids having a specific gravity of 0.75 or greater, the transmitter is able to operate at process temperatures ranging up to 300° F. The transmitter is completely submerged and unaffected by fumes or vapors.

Flowline,  
Los Alamitos, CA  
Write in 1185

#### Sanitizing Foot Mats



These sanitizing foot mats provide sanitizing action for food processing, dairy and beverage plants. The mats have thousands of pliable rubber tips to scrape contaminants from the

bottom of footwear. These rubber tips bend under pressure to immerse shoe soles in disinfectant solution.

The Supply Corp., Lake Geneva, WI  
Write in 1192

#### In-Line Liquid Process Monitor



The Messenger liquid monitoring system features a compact transmitter and up to four sensors for process control, filter breakthrough and color measurement applications. Capable of monitoring turbidity, suspended solids and color simultaneously, this system can achieve a dynamic range of 0 to 1 ppm, 0 to 500 ppm or 100 to 10,000 ppm.

Monitek, a Metrisa Co., Bedford, MA  
Write in 1195

#### Faucet Attachments

These faucet aerators introduce air into the water stream to produce a larger and whiter stream soft to the touch. Laminar stream straighteners produce a non-aerated water stream suitable for high-flow appli-



cations. Spray devices can produce a miniature shower pattern to provide full coverage of the hands during washing when flow rate is low.

NEOPERL, Inc., Waterbury, CT

## PRODUCTS

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