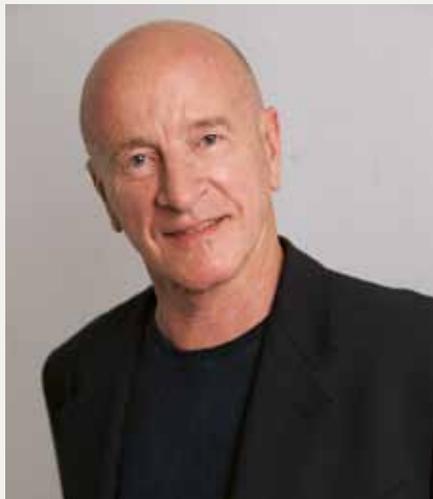


LET'S STOP TELLING PEOPLE WHAT TO DO



By Mike Bosworth
www.mikebosworthleadership.com
mtb@mblstoryseekers.com

I am now an author, speaker and trainer. I specialize in helping leaders improve sales productivity. In my business, the “Holy Grail of sales productivity improvement” has always been to codify and institutionalize the best selling practices of the very best salespeople. In other words, figure out what the top 13% (“Eagles”) are doing, and teach the rest (“Journeymen”) a framework for doing what the best do intuitively.

When doing keynote speeches I like to ask the people in my audiences to raise their hands if their mother wanted them to grow up and have a career in sales. Very few people raise their hands. I ask my audiences to shout out the adjectives their mothers would use to describe salespeople. People typically shout out a whole list of disparaging adjectives – pushy, sleazy, difficult, annoying, etc. It seems as much as we all love to buy things, most of us do not like feeling “sold” to.

However, Daniel Pink makes the point in his latest book, “To Sell is Human” that we are ALL in sales. At least the ‘all’ of us who find ourselves wanting to influence other people to do difficult things that will benefit them. Parents, friends, teachers, CEOs, politicians, preachers, leaders, lawyers, family members and yes, salespeople all want to influence other people.

In many of the potential scenarios above, one party has authority over the other. Salespeople however, do not have authority over their customers and prospects. The challenge of selling is to influence people you have no authority over to do difficult things that will benefit them. The vast majority of

PGRI Introduction: Mike Bosworth was a keynote speaker at the NASPL Professional Development Seminar in San Diego. I asked him to share his story for I grew up wanting to learn to ‘fish,’ to support myself. With a father as a salesman who kept us in poverty, selling was the last thing I ever wanted to do as a career. But life had other ideas for me. I reluctantly decided to try sales at Xerox in 1975. More on that story later ...

top tier salespeople do this intuitively.

Likewise, we know the best leaders influence people to do difficult things that will benefit them without having to use their ‘authority’ card. When leaders feel the need to resort to using their authority, their ability to influence diminishes.

Back to my story about getting into sales. By time I was 28 years old, I was the number one salesperson in Xerox Computer Services. With 20/20 hindsight, I now understand what I was intuitively doing back then that enabled me to sell so much. I was an ‘expert’ at knowing how to solve the shortages problem in assembly manufacturing companies. How did I become an expert? I had the good fortune to work on the customer support side for two and a half years before I went into sales. I KNEW the details about the Materials Managers’ shortage problems in seconds because they all had the same problems back then. Maybe because I was 28 and most of my prospects were in their 40’s and 50’s, I didn’t feel right telling them what they ‘needed to do’ because of our age difference. So, my intuitive strategy was to offer them a story about another materials manager who had figured out a way to manage his shortages.

They ALL said YES to that offer of a story. That story became the vehicle for helping them see that they weren’t the only materials managers suffering from shortages and that Xerox had hope for a solution. In that story they learned that one of their peers (less than 1 mile away) was an early adopter of the Xerox MRP system and that it really IS possible to reduce shortages and inventory at the same time. This story, combined with their own struggles with the problem, gave them hope that there was a now a better way. That hope motivated them to open up and share their situations with me. I could then tend their stories and build the trust I would need to influence them to trying a new way.

Had I been in my 40’s or 50’s at the time, I probably would have told them what they needed to do and would have been a mediocre performer.

By the late 70’s I had the good fortune to work with Neil Rackham on the Xerox SPIN project. One of the revelations from Rackham’s research was that over time, a seller’s expertise could become his enemy. When a seller becomes expert enough at knowing the solution to the customer’s problem before the customer, most of them push their customer away by telling them ‘what they need’ to do. The irony is, they are correct. They DO know exactly what their customer needs to solve his problem. And, the reason they are so excited is they have that exact thing for sale. And, many of them calculate the commission they are going to make on this sale in real time.

Expertise and enthusiasm cause many sellers to hit a ‘slump.’ Their behavior causes many buyers to retreat from the ‘pushy’ salesperson. We call it, ‘premature elaboration.’ When I was the ‘expert’ salesperson, I had the intuitive good strategy of offering a peer story rather than telling them what they needed to do.

Most people do not like unsolicited advice. Most of us do not like being told what we ‘need to’ do by anyone else, much less a salesperson. In our workshops we ask participants who doubt this to call their spouse on the next break and try 2 or 3 “you need to’s” on them and see how they respond. If the person who in theory loves you more than anyone else won’t take it from you, why would your customer or prospect?

So, what is it about stories? As human beings, we are genetically wired to emotionally connect with other humans. For 100,000+ years, two-legged human-like creatures have been roaming the earth and for the vast majority of that time there were no written languages. Darden Professor Jeanne Liedtka says that stories were developed for two purposes: to pass on tribal knowledge and to get people to do difficult things that need to be done.

What happens when a human being anticipates a story? When we anticipate a story (some version of ‘once upon a time’) we have an unconscious reaction of, ‘oh, a sto-

ry, I don't have to do anything, I don't have to make a decision so I can just enjoy.' Yet, a simultaneous intuitive voice whispers in our ear, 'this could be important information, I'd better pay attention, I might have to remember this.' What better frame of mind could you ever wish for in the mind of a person you would like to influence?

When we anticipate a story, our critical left-brain powers down and our right brain opens up. Our right brain is connected to all our senses and imagination (art, music, food, thrills, touch). Our right-brain is also connected to our limbic, emotional brain. It is in our emotional brain where we decide why we are going to do something. It is our emotional brain that decides, 'this feels good,' or 'I like this person,' or 'I trust this person,' or, 'even though I don't have all the facts, I am going to take a leap of faith and try something new.' We still need our left-brain (analysis) to come up with enough logic to convince those that

matter to us that we are sane. Insight is a whole-brain process. We make emotional decisions for logical reasons. Stories allow us to educate, inspire and influence people without telling them 'what they need to do.' Stories enable us to motivate others to do difficult things by enabling insight – the Ah-Ha moment.

Another wonderful thing about stories is we can all learn to be much better at building them, telling them and tending them that we ever would have realized.

In our Story Seekers workshops we use a 'card' system. Every participant gets a story board 'placemat' that has the five elements of a story in our framework. The YELLOW card is the 'why' of the hero of the story, the GREEN card is the setting and introduction of the character(s), the WHITE card is the struggle, the complication, the BLUE card is the turning point; the new insight, and the RED card is the resolution to the story. This framework allows ordinary human beings

who have never been that good at connecting, inspiring and influencing other people to learn to do it in 2.5 days!

Think about a person you would like to influence to do something difficult that will benefit them. Do you think they would like you to tell them what they need to do, or might they rather accept the offer of a story?

The power of story can help you emotionally connect with others. Most of us struggle to be influenced by people we do not trust or like. Connection is an integral component of trust. Trust is necessary in order to be able to influence.

Our mission at Mike Bosworth Leadership is to help 'journeymen,' influencers – parents, friends, teachers, executives, leaders, politicians, preachers, lawyers, family members and yes, salespeople influence others to do difficult things that will benefit them. The power of story facilitates influence, with or without authority. ♦

Theo Gößner Interview ...continued from page 18

that want the EU to impose a pan-European regulatory framework. The EU Commission has already acknowledged that there is no reason to create a pan-European system that would result in a race to the bottom of minimal taxation. The EU Commission has stated that their focus is on consumer pro-

tection and responsible gaming. So, we are hopeful that the EU Commission will recognize that we, and our counterparts in other EU nations, are taking every measure to deliver the highest standards of consumer protection and responsible gaming and to have a fair regulatory system. And we hope the

EU Commission recognizes that bowing to the pressure of the few small Member States which want free and open borders would be devastating to the causes that depend on funding from lotteries, and would most definitely not contribute to the goal of protecting the consumer. ♦

The DiCristina Case Lives ...continued from page 54

er court's finding that skill predominates over chance in determining the outcome of Texas Hold 'Em poker played over time. Rather, the Appeals Court's holding decided merely that such question was not relevant in DiCristina's case, since his gambling business was unlawful under New York State law, and therefore constituted an illegal gambling business under the IGBA. Thus, although undoubtedly of less significance, the lower court's decision still may be used to support the argument that Texas Hold'em poker is a game of skill, and not chance, and thus not "gambling" in jurisdictions where a gambling game is defined as one in which chance predominates over skill. Because of its detailed examination of Texas Hold'em poker and its recitation and analysis of expert testimony, the lower court's opinion should remain useful in such other jurisdictions. Nothing in the Appeals Court's decision discredited or cast doubt upon the expert testimony presented in the lower court or the lower court's analysis thereof. (Indeed, already there is evidence that the lower court's decision in DiCristina is viable to support future legal arguments. In an unpublished opinion dated September 3, 2013, the Court of Appeals of Minnesota cited the lower court's decision in DiCristina as support for its conclusion

that the outcome of the game of blackjack ("21") is determined predominately by chance. (In the Matter of the Request of North Metro Harness Initiative, LLC, to Amend its Plan of Operation, 2013 Minn. App. Unpub. LEXIS 838)

Notwithstanding the subsequent reversal, the lower court's decision in DiCristina is important to state lotteries because it supports the position that peer-to-peer Texas Hold'em poker is a game in which skill predominates over chance in determining the outcome. In many states, the state's lottery is limited to conducting "lottery" games, defined often as games in which chance predominates over skill in determining the outcome (and also involving "consideration" and a "prize"). In those states, therefore, the state lottery would be precluded from offering peer-to-peer Texas Hold'em poker, since that game would not be considered a "lottery" game (since skill predominated over chance in determining the outcome). Thus, the lower court's decision in DiCristina may continue to be important to state lotteries, notwithstanding its reversal, since that reversal did not discredit or cast doubt upon the expert testimony presented in the lower court or the lower court's analysis thereof. ♦