



## Activity vs. Productivity

By Mike Stewart, CSP

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**Salespeople are busy, busy, busy!** There is so much to do, and it's a mathematical fact that there is not enough time for salespeople to do everything they feel they have to do. In fact, studies have shown that the activities typically seen as sales responsibilities would require 150% of an average salesperson's time.

**You simply can't do everything** that is asked of you and have the time left over to succeed in your sales, or sales management, responsibilities. Therefore, if you are to be successful, you must prioritize those tasks and activities that lead to success while eliminating those that don't.

**"What to leave in and what to leave out?"** wondered Bob Segar in his classic song "Against the Wind.". At one time or another most all of us have felt like we're running against the wind, searching for shelter, with deadlines and commitments, and so much to think about. It should not be so hard, actually, for salespeople to decide what to leave in and what to leave out.

**You must leave in those sale-producing activities** that enable you to achieve your sales goals. Likewise...

**You must leave out the non-sales-producing activities** that continually burn up your schedule and leave you without meaningful, or even acceptable, sales results to show for your time and effort.

***Besides the noble art of getting things done, there is the noble art of leaving things undone. The wisdom of life is learning to eliminate the non-essentials.***

*– Chinese Proverb*

**What are the non-essentials you must eliminate?** They are the tasks and activities that you are involved in that don't give you a reasonable return on your investment of time and energy. Measure a reasonable return in the form of more prospects in your sales funnel and more closed sales.

**Examples of non-essentials are:**

- Doing other people's jobs, such as customer service, etc.
- Handling emergencies that can be handled by someone else
- Meaningless reports

- Anything you are doing that can be done by someone else who is not a rain-maker!

**You are the only person who can produce revenue** in your territory. It doesn't make sense for you to perform routine tasks that can be handled by others! These tasks and activities take away from the time you should be using to take advantage of your hard-earned sales skills to produce more new sales revenue.

***I only do those things that only I can do.***  
*- Critical Wisdom for Success*

**Talk to your manager** about your situation and let him or her know of any tasks or activities that are part of your job description - or that you are doing by default, such as customer service or marketing support functions - that can and should be done by someone else. Then, ask him to make the changes that will free you up to do what you have been hired to do - and, very simply, that is SELL NEW BUSINESS.

**If you are a manager** forget about “the way it’s always been done” and think about what I’ve just said with a curious mind. Analyze the activities you (or “the company”) are requiring your salespeople to do that don’t result directly in the generation of new business and take action now to free your team up to make more calls and close more sales.

***Make more sales calls and close more sales!***

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