

Time To Grow Up Again

By Mike Stewart, CSP



Who has never been in a slump?

I recently accepted a new coaching client who is in a slump. She has been a top performer in the past, but about a year ago her production dropped drastically.

Not only did her production drop to an unacceptable level, but she quit doing the activities that were required by her position description, such as timely quality call reports, and other administrative functions. When her manager talked to her about the situation, she displayed a lot of enthusiasm for her job and made glowing promises that she would correct her behavior immediately.

Unfortunately, she didn't change her ways and she was put on probation. Her termination seemed unavoidable.

Her company has been a Client of mine for several years and her manager talked to me about this sad situation. He decided to offer her performance coaching, so we got started.

Every situation is different and her's may be nothing like yours, but it may provide some insight in the event you find yourself beginning to slump.

There is a reason for everything. In her case, we discovered that several elements came together like a "perfect storm" which she allowed to put her into the slump she was experiencing:

1. She lost one of her key Customers to a competitor because of price and she blamed her company for not supporting her. On her pay plan, this situation will cost her thousands of dollars this year.
2. Two of her Customers let her down. They made promises they reneged on and she felt used and taken

advantage of.

3. A personal situation had come to a head in her marriage, and she and her husband had gone to a professional therapist and had this problem under control. However, just the fact that it had happened undermined her confidence.

***“ America’s favorite pastime isn’t baseball.
America’s favorite pastime is the transfer
of blame and responsibility.”***

– Skip Bertman, NCAA National Championship Coach

As we worked together, she came to these conclusions:

- The company had a pay plan that rewarded increased territory sales, and she had made a lot of money under the plan in the past.
- She knew and understood the reasons for the pricing policies and had been able to foresee this situation. Instead of accepting it and re-doubling her sales efforts to replace this business, she just doubled up in defiance and refused to accept that maintaining and increasing volume in her territory was her responsibility.
- When she thought about her customers’ not following through on their commitments to her, she looked at it through their eyes and understood why it was to their benefit to do what they did. Even though she still feels they were wrong, she refuses to let the actions of others dictate how she feels about herself, and has determined to sell more to them than she ever has. (She has just gotten one big sale from one of them, and has a huge deal working with the other.)
- She has talked with her husband about all of this and has his unqualified support.
- She completes her call report after each call, before she makes the next one. This has dramatically improved the quality of her reports, takes far less time, and frees her mentally and emotionally from having the reports hanging over her head.
- Even though she can’t make her sales goals for the year, she is determined to exceed the prorated goals for the last quarter, and is well on her way to

doing that.

When I complimented her on her achievements, she made a profound statement,

"I just realized it was time for me to grow up again."

Then she added, "When I grew up the first time, I learned all these things. Then when everything started to pile up on me, I just found it easy to take the path of least resistance. Instead of taking accountability for my own responsibilities, I found it easier to give up and blame others. I'm embarrassed and disappointed in myself, but I'm not willing to live with these feelings. I refuse to be fired from a job I really like and leave a company that believes in me."

Every one of us gets down once in awhile. If that happens to you, specifically identify what you are not doing, ask yourself what conditions are going on in your life that are creating such adverse behavior, and come to terms with them.

Here are some tips that may help you:

- Every salesperson I have ever known has had to deal with negative situations beyond his control, such as paperwork, poor management, internal politics, pricing problems, customers who lie, and on and on. Successful salespeople don't let these things stop them, so Get Over It!
- Accept the fact that you are accountable for your own performance. Until you do this, your prospects for performing up to your potential are very poor, indeed.
- Look at every adverse situation from the other person's perspective and accept them for what they are, flawed human beings, just like you.
- Sell hard!

Establish trusting relationships with one or more people who believe in you, whom you can trust completely, who will be objective and tell you the unvarnished truth about everything, and be your champion. Disclose completely to this person, always look for solutions instead of wallowing in the problems, decide what you want, and go get it.

“I’ll Try’ is just a pre-emptive excuse for failure.”
– Mike Stewart , CSP

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