

Sandler Brief®

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Yesterday's Accomplishments Won't Guarantee Tomorrow's Success

Today, many salespeople find themselves operating in a more intricate sales environment. There are more players involved in the process of describing and defining the scope and requirements of the sales opportunity. Buying authority, in many instances, has been shifted “upstairs” in the organization where there are more players influencing the buying decision. Expenditures are being scrutinized more carefully by more people. And, delivery requirements are often more stringent.

In this more complex sales arena, the possibility for something to be overlooked and the potential sale to be derailed are greater than ever. Your ability to focus—and remain focused—is paramount. Your ultimate success depends on your ability to maintain a steady vision of your marketplace and your customers' needs, and not be distracted by a variety of questionable possibilities (where you may not have the requisite knowledge, expertise, or deliverables) just because it seems like a good idea at the time.

Your success also depends on your ability to apply critical thinking to your prospects' views of their situations, and then, using your knowledge and experience, analyze those situations and conceptualize ideas quickly and accurately. Today, being action-oriented is not automatically considered a virtue; your actions must be backed by accurate analysis and careful thought and planning.

In less complicated selling environments, many salespeople have been able to succeed by virtue of their personality traits or their technical expertise alone. But today, it is necessary to communicate with your prospects in a number of ways—face-to-face meetings, e-mails, phone calls, and group presentations—and you can't rely on your personality or expertise to get by. The ability to express your thoughts clearly and concisely—verbally and in writing—is critical. Your careful analysis and recommendations are lost if you can't communicate effectively.

The continuation of yesterday's success is not guaranteed. To succeed in what is becoming an increasingly more complex sales arena, you'll need the skills to focus intently on your prospects and customers, accurately analyze their situations and relate their needs to your company's core competencies, and effectively communicate the connections between those needs and your company's deliverables. The greater the degree to which you hone those skills, the greater levels of success you will ultimately attain.



You Can Have Anything You Want

One of the most popular books on the topic of *success* is Napoleon Hill's *Think and Grow Rich*, first published in 1937 and still in print today. It is a motivational personal development book based on his earlier book, *Laws of Success*. He condensed the laws into 13 principles in the form of a personal philosophy of success. It has been estimated that *Think and Grow Rich* has sold over 60 million copies worldwide and has been read by several times that number of people.

Some readers (a scant few, in relation to the huge number of readers) have attained enormous success and obtained a vast array of life's riches, as a result of Hill's philosophy. Many, many, many, many, many have not!

What separates the few from the many?



Most people read the book, pondered some of the concepts it revealed, and then put it back on the bookshelf and went about their daily lives. Others did more than merely run their eyes over the words on the pages—they *studied* the words. They applied their mind, ideas, and thoughts to the substance of the words they read. They understood that you can't apply what you don't understand; and you can't fully understand without careful examination.

But, it took more than careful examination.

Those who achieved great success were also able to visualize themselves applying what they were studying. In their minds' eyes they could see themselves behaving and performing in new ways. Each time they replayed their visions, they reinforced their beliefs in themselves and their ability to make their vision a reality.

And then, they went one step further.

They didn't merely promise themselves that they would apply what they had been studying and visualizing; they took action. They converted their preparation into performance.

Today, there is a vast amount of information available on almost any topic (much of which can be obtained with only a few strokes on the computer keyboard) to help you achieve the pinnacle of success in any endeavor or area of your life. But, success is not automatic. You must be willing to first prepare—read, study, visualize—and then perform. The French playwright, Molière wrote, "Men are all alike in their promises. It is only in their deeds that they differ."

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