

## Are Your People Professional Salespeople or Professional Visitors?

By Joe Heller, High Performance Sales Coaching

Over the weekend I spoke at a conference in Napa Valley, CA on “How To Brand The Sales Force”. As I led the group of CEOs through a series of different exercises they began to grasp that their sales force are the ambassadors for their organizations brand and are directly responsible for how they are perceived in their market – no matter how much money they spent on advertising and marketing.

The foundational point everyone who wants to dominate their market must realize is -- the sales force not only represents their brand, they are their brand.

The market judges your company’s value in direct proportion to the perceived value of the salesperson they interact with. Remember, your sales team interacts with your market every day, and for better or for worse they carry your message better than any brochure or website. My message to you is that your salespeople are your brand!

After the talk, I was invited to go out to a private diner with the group’s leadership to continue the branding discussion (and drink some great wine) on several points I made earlier.

### Here are a few...

First, I challenged the CEOs to define how their company’s value was perceived inside their market or more importantly what misperceptions the market had about them. Ponder these two questions about your organization before you go on. The misperception question is a trick question. Why? There are no misperceptions, only the perceived reality of how your market sees you.

The markets perceived reality directly contributes to the people you have working for you. If you have a “nit-wit” out in the market selling for you then your market will perceive that you have “nit-wits” working throughout your organization. Your market will judge your entire organization by the actions of one person.

**Question:** Why would anyone want to do business with a company full of “nit-wits”?

This is how branding is linked to the sales force. What interested me most was how the group of CEOs fixated on a comment I made that most salespeople today are professional visitors and **not professional salespeople**. What’s the difference? The intent of a professional visitor is focused on having someone “like” them. Being liked is more important and comes at the expense of selling. The salespersons intent is misplaced and they are focused on the wrong outcome. The professional salesperson understands they are paid to sell; that’s their job and they must be focused on making the sale.

**Question:** Why are these two points important for you to reflect on?

People are your brand! If your salespeople are perceived as professional visitors two very important things (consequences) are going to happen.

- 1) Meeting with a Professional Visitor is a complete waste of time. A study I read earlier this year discussed why decision makers bought from salespeople. The stated the #1 reason was TRUST. They trusted that the salesperson would perform as expected; stay focused on the sales process, communicates specific value and delivers the product as promised. The #11 reason stated was LIKE-ABILITY. The inherent problem is that most sales people are focused on being liked and NOT on selling.
- 2) Professional Visitors cannot communicate value and thereby must fall back on giving your products away on price. They discount because; first, they lack self-confidence to ask for the order and second it is the only selling tool they know. Once price is in play there is no difference

between you and everyone else, you are equal in stature to every competitor you face. You have gone from being “the choice” to “a choice” in the minds of your market. Price is the only determining factor.

**Note:** If your sales team consists of professional visitors, you have expedited the speed in that you are becoming a commodity. This transition is not because of market conditions, but is directly attributable to the salespeople selling for you. Professional Visitors (aka sales) = Commodity Business.

There are several reasons for this – sales people and sales management.

Salespeople got spoiled during the go-go 90's and forgot how to sell. Almost a generation has passed since salespeople had to go out and earn their keep by closing. And, many sales managers are equally challenged. Sales Managers don't know how to engage salespeople in the sales process to help them succeed. This ranges from not knowing how to lead a sales meeting to focus, educate and motivate the sales team to helping their team close deals in the field.

The result of all this is that your sales force is perpetuating the speed in which you become a commodity. If your sales force is not trusted and not perceived well in your market, your market will not trust you and will not appreciate your existence. At this point, you've destroyed your brand and perpetuated becoming a commodity.

In conclusion, your salespeople are your brand! They interact with your market every single day. They are either establishing your value or they are failing miserably to dominate your market. It's that simple. Take a look at your sales team and consider this... what is running through the minds of decision makers when one of your salespeople calls on them. Ask yourself, are your salespeople contributing to your success or putting nails in your coffin that will put your company 6-feet under faster than a new competitor. Happy Halloween!

One final note; in order to become successful in selling you must become an avid student of what works in selling. I developed the Revenue Warrior Selling System (TM) to give you a competitive advantage and succeed against your most challenging competition. You can find the Revenue Warrior Selling System (TM) on my site <http://www.JoeHeller.com>. Go there right now and click on the Revenue Warrior Selling System (TM) to learn more. It's a great resource from my personal library for yours.

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