

## DARING TO BE DIFFERENT IS THE KEY DIFFERENCE

“Remember always that you not only have the right to be an individual, you have an obligation to be one.” Eleanor Roosevelt

How many Salespeople do you know who acted on just 6 new skills this past year?

Many get stuck in a comfort zone achieving some success and they then become content and stop growing. But, success and peak performance are not the same things. In this writing, I'll share some ideas which you might think, “That’s not me” or they might even frighten you. Even if you’re afraid of change, try new things on a regular basis and you’ll be delighted to find what was once scary becomes a great part of your everyday success. Change is inevitable, except from a vending machine.

Start by being weird and fun. I’ve found, over the decades, that being “out there” a bit is extremely effective for getting appointments, developing relationships and obtaining a lot of business. Don’t be afraid of displaying a quirkier side as it will differentiate you from hundreds of other Salespeople who come off as robots. Almost everyone, even including some accountants, enjoy being with someone who is fun to be with and interesting. Every person and corporation goes through good and bad times but their doors fly open to gravitate to those who bring a sense of humor, creativity and value-add propositions. It is a “small number club” you can join.

Here’s some things I have personally done and currently do for clients for **creativity**.

- I give away golf gloves with my logo instead of golf balls. Balls are lost and cut. Gloves stare at them on every shot.
- I don't ask for an 8:00 am appointment. I ask for 8:03 am followed by a confirming note that states, "I'll arrive at 7:59 am for my 8:03 am". It works every time. They are almost always in the lobby for two reasons: 1) to see what time I arrive and 2) to meet a weirdo.
- I use postage stamps with my photo.
- Instead of a lunch at a restaurant, I arrange for a gourmet caterer to serve it at the client's desk. Invite all decision-makers. They love watching the presentation.
- Ten-minute chair massages for a small group works well. Who doesn't have stress?
- I don't send flowers. I send small cactus as I'll then be there forever.
- I don't just get a group out for a ball game. All of us meet at a great restaurant followed by a rental van to drop all of us at the ballpark entrance so clients didn't have to walk from a distant lot. I have a Salesperson at our seating area hand out programs I've signed with a personal note. A Salesperson goes to get the van again in the 7<sup>th</sup> inning to avoid clients from walking to the parking lot. The very first time I did this I landed a Fortune 100 client that day. As an added touch, we get a retired player to appear and sign balls while I sign books, provide complimentary consulting and set up appointments for the next few days for my client and me. The table has been set for success.
- I like to send post cards, from international travels, to someone I've never met. Signed, "I'm excited about seeing you, Bill." It drives them nuts... "Who is Bill?" They don't throw it away until I call. The Assistant then asks, "May I tell him who is calling?" "Yes, this is Bill." Assistant: "Who are you? It's been driving us nuts!" Appointments are easy.

- I had a client whose logo was a General from the Civil War. I had a pottery maker prepare several liquor decanters painted to match the General. Beat the heck out of a generic gift they would have forgotten about...quickly.
- I was meeting with two clients, and they both loved my Italian dress shirt I was wearing. Me: “What size are you?” And “Sorry, if it was your sizes I’d take it off and give it to one of you.” I called my shirt vendor and ordered two monogrammed shirts in their sizes. They both wore them on my next visit(s).
- I’ve arranged for a portable car wash firm to pull into the client’s parking lot and wash all decision-makers cars. I’ve arranged for shoe shine stands brought in. Two spectacles.
- Since I speak for meetings, I have “Bill Blades for Speaker” bumper stickers which I put on airplane walls and on the back of flight attendants. Too weird? I’ve landed clients that way.
- Even my roller bag reads, “Got Sales?” (like “Got Milk?”) along with my website. Views? Maybe 100,000+.

I’ll stop on creativity ideas because I know what some logical Salespeople are thinking. But, I’ll add that if Salespeople fought sin as hard as they fight creativity and humor, this would be a more wonderful place for a lot of people.

Let’s move on to **extra-extra value-add propositions**.

I gave my first speech at One Times Square at the age of 22. I then gave my first convention speech, for my industry, at 24 years of age. It progressed to me speaking over 25 times annually for our industry meetings and for potential clients. I landed many Fortune 5000 clients by speaking on sales and leadership issues versus trying to sell them something.

One CEO, during the break, was talking to his executive staff. After all of us got back to the meeting room, he asked if he could speak. In front of his group, he said, “I invested over \$1 million in educating this group last year and we all just agreed that we received more usable ideas in 90 minutes than all of last year. I have to ask, what do you want in return?” I said, “just your X and Y business (their two largest items we were already approved with) and I’d like to leave here with our first order today.” He asked, “what time is your flight?” After I told him the time, he replied, “let’s leave here at 1:00 pm to go to the office and get it done.” It was about value.

Later, after I began speaking and consulting as a profession, I asked my clients to arrange for me to speak for their largest, potential clients. Every time, we gained an abundance of business. Why? We provided valuable value-added services by giving them ideas on how to grow their people and their business. Their current vendor became irrelevant as they were just taking orders.

Often, I get my clients to arrange for me to meet with CEO’s of their potential clients. The CEO has been encouraged to visit my site and to have some challenges to share with me. I open the meeting by signing one of my books which sets up a good atmosphere. Sometimes I go alone and sometimes with my client’s Salesperson, depending on the circumstances and the client’s wishes. This beats a routine call any day. And, I always ask for business as we just earned it. Closing ratio? About 95%.

Scott Romeo ([www.thestrategyexpert.com](http://www.thestrategyexpert.com)) wrote, “A sale is an outcome. It is the result of careful analysis of your potential clients and your own strategy for obtaining clients. Stop concentrating on the

sale or the final outcome and start focusing on the strategies that can result in a sale.” That’s why the value-added services I mentioned above are not for every CEO. They are for select, targeted and progressive firms we want a relationship with. And, with those that prefer vendors who are fun, creative and value oriented – whether they realize it or not.

Otherwise, it’s tough to just try to sell stuff to anybody. Joy and value win hands down almost every time. Out are the ways of selling from long ago. In are the opportunities to be “out there” and more successful.

“Courage doesn’t always roar. Sometimes courage is the little voice at the end of the day saying, ‘I will try again tomorrow’.” Mary Anne Radmacher – American Author

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