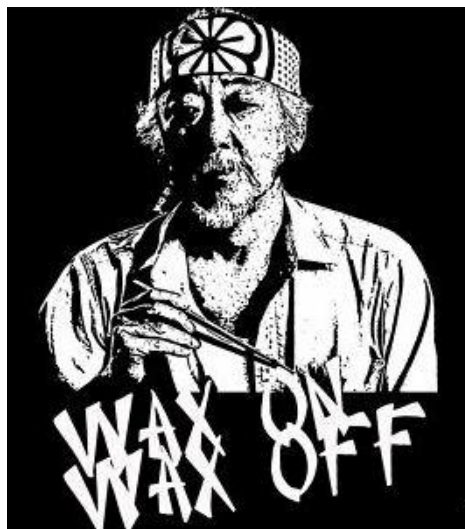


50 WAYS TO GET "BACK TO SCHOOL"



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Dear Reader,

Thanks for stopping by to check out these tips to help you grow as a sales professional.

As with everything I do on Sales Playbook, there are no strings attached, no catch, no hidden agenda.

If you like the tips, feel free to pass them along to your network and if you don't, then this E-Book deserves a one way trip to your "round file".

Thanks again and happy selling!

With respect & appreciation,

Paul Castain

Aspiring Rock Star

The Journey Begins With Mindset!

We need to consider ourselves students and as such we can learn from everyone.

One of my favorite guitar players (Randy Rhoads) was an absolute maniac on the guitar. As good as he was, he still made it a point to call up local guitar teachers while on tour with Ozzy. While I'm quite confident he could have actually been the teacher, his motivation behind this was that he could always learn something.

So, I can't help but think if an actual rock star like this still had the mindset of student, perhaps us aspiring rock stars could find a lesson in that!

As students, we need to learn from everyone. Why limit ourselves to the gurus and sages or even, other sales professionals. Lessons are all around us in all shapes, sizes and backgrounds. Don't ever forget that!

How Does One Capture "The Lesson"?

As many of you know, I'm a big advocate of [keeping a journal](#). I make it a point to have my journal, out, front and center, opened, pen in hand whenever:

- I read
- I'm listening to a conference call, webinar or podcast
- When I'm in a meeting with one of my teammates

The reason for this is that it puts me back in “student mode” and it also tells my brain “Alright dude, I went to the trouble to open up the journal, we’re here to learn”

I truly believe that in doing this for over 15 years, I’ve conditioned myself to be the student. Not an easy role when you’ve trained over 3,000 professionals, but my growth depends on it.

I would also highly recommend that you purchase a digital voice recorder and get in the habit of “jotting things down” as you think of them, or when getting at your journal is a tad difficult.

Ideas and “lessons” are a terrible thing to waste!

The “Sales 101 Gut Check”

As you come across ideas, tips and strategies something dangerous may happen to you. You might find yourself about to dismiss something because of its simplicity or “Sales 101ness” That’s when you initiate the gut check. The very next time you find yourself labeling something as “Sales 101”, ask the following question: “Is this Sales 101 and I’m already doing this or is this Sales 101 and I need to get off my ass and actually do this instead of labeling it?”

In Search Of The “Big Answer”

Good luck with that one. I don't believe it exists and furthermore it's a dangerous mindset for you and I to have! Why? Because when we chase things as illusive as a big “AHA” we miss all the little things, the details, the basics that quite frankly, pack a much bigger punch!

Egos Suck!

Understand that your ego prevents you from allowing yourself to be vulnerable. Don't blame your ego, its just doing its job. When we don't allow ourselves to be vulnerable we can't ask for help, we hesitate to ask questions because we feel like a rookie. I've even seen egos prevent other sales people from approaching the dude who was number 1 in the company or the Sales Manager from asking the star rep to share their tips with the team!

What amazes me is that as sales professionals we have the guts to make that cold call, get rejected (sometimes even cursed out) and yet most of us are hesitant (aka “ball less”) in asking for help.

Lose the ego and embrace the lesson!

Questions Are The Answer!

Actually, killer questions are the answer. The quality of your questions enhance the quality of your communication. The quality of your communication enhances the quality of the information you seek.

Just For The Heck Of It . . .

When you meet people:

- Ask them what they are reading or what they have read.
- Ask them for advice
- Ask them about their “story”. How did they get to where they are today? What are your own observations on what makes them successful?
- Ask them about cool resources they can recommend, people you should know and can learn from

Ask Better Questions Of Yourself Grasshopper!

Hint: “Why me?” isn’t one of them!

Whenever you face a challenge, ask yourself questions that give you quality answers!

One of my favorite brainstorming questions is to ask “In what ways can I (fill in the blank with the challenge)

Ask yourself questions about where you need to improve, where you already kick butt, questions about skills you need to acquire, people you need to know, experience you need to get.

Ask Questions Immediately After Your Appointments!

Don’t even think about racing to your next appointment without a quick debrief in your car.

Ask: “What went well?” What did I do that I need to keep doing?”

And now the fun question. The question where you have to send your ego out to the movies or something first.

Ask: “What could I have done better?”

Just Out Of Curiosity . . .

When was the last time you asked your clients . . .

Why they do business with you?

What you could do better?

When was the last time you asked a prospect why they chose your competitor over you?

When was the last time you asked your boss for feedback?

Oh, and leaders, when was the last time you asked your team what you could do better?

Can You Hear Me Now Dude?

We need to learn to listen. In fact, experts say that the highest level of listening one can engage in is “listening to learn” instead of “listening to respond”

It seems like we are so busy “one upping” the other person’s story that we miss mucho lessons.

The “Truth” Might Piss You Off!

Perhaps we should all stop seeking validation and instead seek the truth. The lesson is always in the truth my friend!

Commit To A “Rust Free” Career!

One way is to make sure you get 30 minutes of reading time in each day. Don't have the time? Find the time! Get up 30 minutes earlier. Stay up 30 mins later. Stop watching Lost, the news, playing Mafia Wars and invest in yourself!

Read things like Success Magazine. I think its totally freakin cool that through that magazine I can hang with people like John Maxwell, Darren Hardy, people who have failed and come back bigger than ever, people who came from poverty and built empires. People that you and I need to model!

Side note: My wife and I have a deal. I don't bother her when she is at the end of a cool novel. In return, she stays away from me when my Success Magazine arrives!

You need to read Selling Power Magazine as well. Why wouldn't you tap into the awesome brain power of others who are getting results you desire?

Robin Sharma tells a story about how his Dad used to tell him our next idea can come from the things we read. We just don't know which book (or magazine, podcast or blog)

Don't ever underestimate the power of 1 cool idea!

With that in mind, let's look at 50 cool ideas to get you back to school!

1. Get an “accountability partner” to keep you on track.
2. Join or form a mastermind group.
3. Keep a [journal](#) (I know I said this already but my E-Book, my rules)
4. Take time to think. Running, running, running might have you running beyond the “lesson”
5. Understand that your library card can be the most valuable card in your wallet. They have lots of free resources including magazines, cd’s, dvd’s and even free workshops!
6. Ask a question on LinkedIn! And while we’re at it, participate in the damn groups. That’s how you learn and build your brand!
7. Get into the mindset of “reinvesting in yourself”. Hint: there’s lots of ways in this Free E-Book!
8. Don’t get into the bad habit of only improving areas where you are weak. Remember to put some polish where you are strong . . . so you become stronger!
9. The force is strong in these [70 Sales Experts on Twitter](#)
10. Understand that life is a “Mixed Martial Art” and as such you need to learn multiple fighting styles. Don’t ever stop at one!
11. Hire a coach!
12. Find people who are getting the result you want and model their success!
13. Use your [sales meetings](#) as an educational venue!
14. Mucho Sales Blogs <http://sales.alltop.com/>
15. Seek “lessons” instead of “answers”!
16. Read 30 mins a day. Join the “Book A Month” club!
17. From now on, look at your meetings suspiciously as in “What am I missing?”
18. Ask your customers what you do well and what you can do better!
19. Ask for input from others, make yourself vulnerable but ultimately you must own your own decision!

20. Want to learn something about yourself? Ask yourself “why am I avoiding (fill in the activity that you’ve been “wussin out” on)
21. Take time to go back to school with your significant other, family, friends as well as your spiritual relationship.
22. Take time to go back to school with the things you love to do “just because”. Life aint just about business . . . just sayin 😊
23. Understand that everyone has a story and wants to be heard. The lesson is in hearing their story, not one upping with yours!
24. Reread books at different points of your life for additional take aways!
25. Change the scenery during your “Thinking Time” I like to vary it from my home office, my patio, the park, the beach. Don’t underestimate the power of different scenery in thought generation!
26. Tape your end of your prospecting calls. Play them back, learn, adjust, rinse and repeat!
27. Want to get better with this crazy thing called “Social Media”? Read Trust Agents by Chris Brogan and Crush It by Gary Vaynerchuk!
28. Become a “people watcher”. It will amaze you what you can learn once you observe. This can also become a cool excuse if your significant other catches you looking at someone attractive. Just tell them “Uncle Paul told me I should people watch” You’re welcome!
29. Want to get better at networking? Need a good strategy or even some ideas on what to say? Read Never Eat Alone by Keith Ferrazi and The Fine Art of Small Talk by Debra Fine.
30. Embrace the mindset of what Tony Robbins calls “CANI” (Constant And Never ending Improvement) Check out this cool MP3 where Tony shares some awesome tips!
<http://www.anthonyrobbinseurope.com/thankyou.htm>
31. Lots of free [E-Books](#) from Yours Truly
32. Study negotiation! Learn how to play the price game with clients and prospects. One of my favorite books on this subject is Secrets of Power Negotiation For Sales People by Roger Dawson. Not Richard Dawson, he was that dude on Family Feud who would practically make out with the contestants.

33. Don't ever end your day without asking "What did I learn today?"
34. Don't ever begin a new day without asking yourself "What skill will I focus on today?"
35. Understand that the truth will occasionally piss you off. Don't seek validation . . . seek the truth!
36. There is an amazing question you need to start asking more and it goes something like this "Why?" Such a simple question that packs a hefty punch!
37. Go back to school with your business acumen. Talk with your CFO. Better yet, ask them to come into the next sales meeting and do a "Business Acumen For Dummies" lesson. As a sales professional you need to understand how a business ticks, how to read financial statements, 10k's and 10q's!
38. Go back to school in understanding the dreaded "gatekeeper". Ask an assistant where you work or perhaps at your client to help you understand their world.
39. Go back to school by keeping your finger on the pulse of business. Read the Wall Street Journal, Businessweek. Watch for emerging industries, troubled industries, innovation, trends, etc. Make sure you go back to school by reading your local business journals too!
40. Go back to school by reading the Go Giver by Bob Burg and John David Mann. It will change your perspective big time!
41. Go back to school by loaning someone a book and encouraging them to mark up the pages with their notes. This gives you the benefit of their thinking. Note: Don't loan books to idiots 😊
42. Go back to school by asking a senior citizen of their biggest accomplishments, regrets and sprinkle in a "If you could do it all again, what would you do differently"
43. Go back to school by reading Kelley Robertson's [The Secrets Of Power Selling](#) This is a must read sales book that has numerous tips on a variety of sales topics all in one convenient place. Kelley writes an excellent blog and a very cool E-Book with 100 tips when you sign up. <http://www.fearless-selling.com/>

44. Go back to school by learning how to “Social Call” instead of “Cold Call” Nigel Edelshain offers a free 24 page E-Book on this subject. Check it out [here](#)
45. When you learn something new, consider teaching it to others. Teaching forces you to “own” the lesson!
46. Be careful not to embrace things that are just “fluff” but lack substance. There’s nothing wrong with a good “Rah, Rah” once in a while, but make sure there is content along with the “motivation”.
47. When you give thought to what you want in life, beware of spending too much time, defining what you don’t want. We have this crazy tendency of attracting that which we continually focus on!
48. Go back to school by taking the time to define why you feel the way you do about certain things. Take the time to question your beliefs. You might just find a relationship between your success and your beliefs. Humor me and try it!
49. Make it a point to step outside your comfort zone each day. I’ll let you in on a secret, that’s how I started blogging back in 2008. It scared the hell out of me, and I wanted to face that fear! You have unused muscles waiting to be developed my friend!
50. Understand that learning, knowledge, information, tips, tricks, strategies are completely useless until you tie them to action.

Some Cool Next Steps If You Like This E-Book

Go to my website <http://yoursalesplaybook.com> and click on the “Free Stuff From Uncle Paul” tab. I have lots of free downloads for you. You’re welcome! 😊

Sign up for my [free sales tips](#). I never give out your information and you won’t get any sales pitches from me because this is my way of giving back!

Join our [Linkedin Group Sales Playbook](#). We have over 13,000 members and 500, spam free discussions. We don’t allow any of the shameless self promotion you see in the other groups . . . just pure discussion the way these groups were meant to be.

Finally, please pass this along to your network and pay it forward!

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