
Five “Mistaken Strategies” That Cap Our Income

by Bill Caskey

STOP DOING THE THINGS THAT LIMIT YOUR INCOME



Sometimes the surest way to a higher income is to STOP doing the things that hold you back. In this article, from years of observation and thousands of coaching assignments, I remind you of what you should “stop doing.”

People come to us wanting to “learn new skills and strategies.” And we do plenty of that. But sometimes it’s just easier to stop doing something than it is to learn a comprehensive set of new skills. When you’re in the personal development business as I am, you are forced to be a student of observation. And my subjects are the people I teach—from the rookie to the midlevel achiever to the highest of achievers.

No Magical Skills

What I’ve observed about the high achievers is not so much that they are special creatures, with magical skills; rather, it’s that they just don’t do the things that the average performer does. And sometimes higher performance is a place we can

reach very simply—by just not doing what we’ve always done. Following are five “mistaken strategies” that I see people pursue that limits their performance. I use the term “mistaken,” because I don’t think these are conscious, carefully considered strategies. They are strategies that we have “fallen into” in our life—unconsciously.

As we learn “how to operate” in the world, we either received advice from our managers or experienced things that seemed to work. We created the rut in which we are now. And as one of my clients says, “I’ve been practicing and getting better— but I’m getting better at the WRONG things.” It seems people, me included, have a lot of practice at that.

1 Stop Talking So Much

Why do sales people talk so much? Not just sales people—but all of us. Watch your Sunday morning talk shows. Why does it take the expert ten minutes to answer a simple question?

Our mistaken strategy is that we’re trying to impress someone into buying.

We've been taught that when you are impressive, you have credibility. Therefore, your odds of making the sale go up.

Sorry. You've got it wrong. Your prospects aren't looking for credibility—they're wanting to feel confident that you can help them solve their problem. And the majority of that confidence comes as a result of their believing you UNDERSTAND what they're dealing with. And that doesn't come from talking. Covey had it right when he said "work to understand, rather than to be understood." (Steven Covey, *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*)

2 Stop Trying To Be Someone You Aren't

Authenticity. What is there about sales that causes us to think we have to be someone else? We have to talk extra loud. Be extra assertive. Why do we always have to be extra happy? Be yourself. People have a sixth sense that warns them of "fakery." When they think you're faking your role, their warning flags will engage. Be who you are. Find their problem. And if "how you show up isn't good enough" move on.

We do a lot of role playing in our programs. It never fails that when a person engages in a mock role-play, they drop into some kind of broadcast mode. Stop broadcasting. Start being real.

3 Stop Talking About Features And Benefits

Don't pounce on the prospect. When they say they have a problem with "A," don't immediately blow

them away with all of the reasons your company will solve problem "A." You can give them that later.

But when they're sharing "pain" with you, just be there with them—hold that space—acknowledge their issues—find out what this means to them personally. Find out if they've had the problem long and why they want to fix it. Share with them, gently, how you prefer to solve those problems. Stop engaging in trickery. They see it coming a mile away.

4 Stop Rushing To The Close

I had a client last week tell me he thought his people were hearing me say "never close." That isn't it. We "close" (get a decision) when, and only when, we hear they have a problem that costs them money—and they convince us it's worth solving. Then we close in order to "help them get their problem solved," not to "get the deal." Get a decision—go for it hard—but NOT BEFORE THEY CONVINCED YOU THEY HAVE A PROBLEM WORTH SOLVING.

5 Stop Assuming That Your Prospect Knows Your Value

I use the metaphor of "connecting the dots." If you, in your effort to explain the value of you and your company, throw a hundred dots on the table and expect the prospect to connect them into a story of what you do, you'll fail. Not only do you have to lay out the dots—you have to connect them carefully and clearly so the prospect clearly understands the BIG PICTURE.

If you're in technology or a complex solution sale, you have a

special problem because you will have this overwhelming desire to use buzzwords to explain the value, which the prospect may not understand. You've probably been using those buzzwords to impress. See #1

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What Do They Give Up?

One way to connect the dots is to have them tell you what they give up if they don't buy. If you are to be a keen, efficient, translator of value, be meticulous at laying it out so the prospect understands what they'll be giving up if they don't do business with you (or get their problem solved). That is the king of all value – "Proprietary Value." That value that only YOU can deliver.

I've got plenty of other things to teach you about what to do, but I think Step #1 is to stop doing these things that limit your income.

Bill Caskey is President of Caskey Achievement Strategies, an Indianapolis-based sales development firm specializing in B2B firms.

He can be reached at 317.575.0057 ext.11 or by email at author@samegamenewrules.com