

Seven Sales Fail Triggers



How to Bust Through Limiting Beliefs and Achieve Even Greater Sales Success



**showcase
workshop**

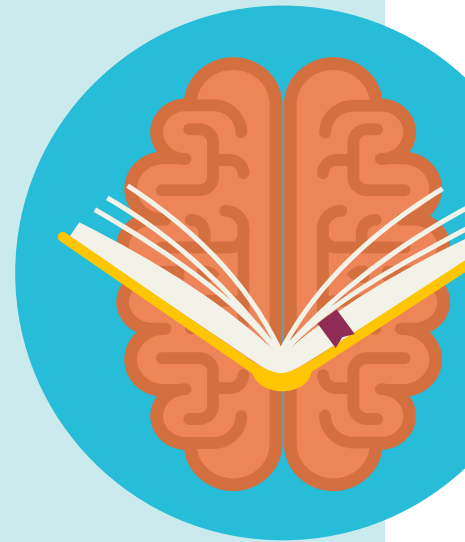
As salespeople we tend to lean heavily on numbers. We know our mindset is important to our success – but the *numbers* are what we really focus on. Deal size, quota, time to close ... *numbers*.

Of course, when it comes to how we think about our customers, bring on the psychology. We are dedicated students of Robert Cialdini's [Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion](#).ⁱ We strive to know the right wording to use to get that elusive “yes” from our prospects. We gauge our customer's state of mind before deciding how to make the pitch.

Understanding the inner beliefs of your customers can get you far. It might have gotten you *very* far.

Your own beliefs, however, might be stopping you from even greater success.

Taking some time to consider your own behaviors, beliefs and mindset could help you bust through that sales ceiling. You might not even realize that beliefs you've had for years are limiting your success.

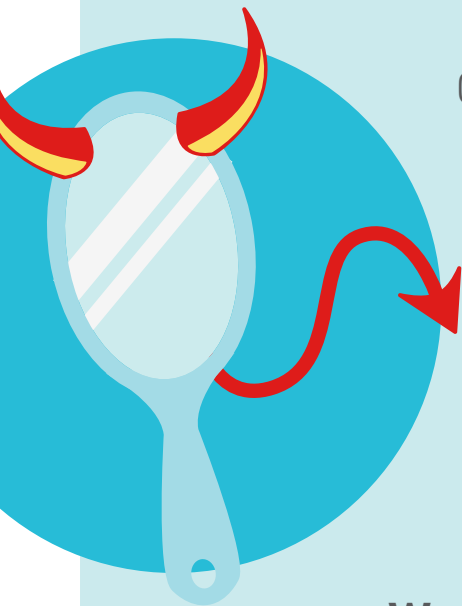


ⁱ Cialdini, R. B. (2007). Influence: The psychology of persuasion. New York: Collins. <https://www.amazon.com/Influence-Psychology-Persuasion-Robert-Cialdini/dp/006124189X/>



No matter how successful you are in sales, you likely have limiting beliefs that are holding you back *and costing you sales*.

Looking at my own beliefs was exactly what I was prompted to do when I came across Marshall Goldsmith's book [Triggers: Creating Behavior That Lasts - Becoming the Person You Want to Be](#).ⁱⁱ I picked the book up because I wanted to see how my beliefs were limiting my progress with my personal health and fitness (hint, quite a lot!). What I didn't realize at the time, however, was how many of these common beliefs impact our ability to make sales.



Our inner beliefs can quietly sabotage us. They can trigger failure before we even try. They can work against our success, decrease the chance we'll achieve our goals.

This isn't just a bunch of "woo woo" nonsense.

We sabotage ourselves all the time by believing things that simply aren't true.

ⁱⁱ Goldsmith, Marshall; Reiter, Mark (2015-05-19). Triggers: Creating Behavior That Lasts--Becoming the Person You Want to Be. The Crown Publishing Group. Kindle Edition. <https://www.amazon.com/Triggers-Creating-Behavior-Lasts-Becoming-Person/dp/0804141231/>



The fact is, our own psychology matters just as much to our sales success as the psychology of our customers.

Inspired by Goldsmith's book, and based on my experience as a salesperson I've reflected on 7 of the key triggers in the book that I think apply especially to sales and I'm calling them "sales fail triggers."

These triggers hold us back from true success. They sabotage our goals – from big things like sales quotas to small things like just keeping accurate records of our leads and prospects.

Read on to discover the 7 Sales Fail Triggers that might be keeping you from success – and what to do about them.



Sales Fail Trigger 1: Today Is a Special Day

“No one wants to hear from a salesperson on a Monday.”

“B2B sales don’t happen on a Friday.”

“Customers don’t pick up their phones the day after a holiday.”

Do any of these “reasons” for not cranking through sales activities on certain days sound familiar?

This is the number one way I see salespeople sabotage their success. They believe that certain days are not good for successful sales.

We identify certain days as bad for sales, inopportune for good conversations, or otherwise unfortunate for business. We convince ourselves that on certain days, buyers are just too busy to hear from us.

The result: We give ourselves permission to slack off on those days. We self-exempt ourselves from consistently making sales because certain days are “special.”



I was guilty of this myself.

When I was a newer salesperson, my “special day” was Wednesday. I believed – I mean *really believed* – that Wednesday was the worst day of the week to make sales. I believed that because Wednesday is “hump day,” that customers were in the wrong frame of mind to be responsive to me and unlikely to be in the mood for my new ideas.

I avoided scheduling meetings on Wednesdays. I also avoided commencing new business or following up with high-quality leads on that day – just in case I somehow damaged these opportunities by working on them on this “bad sales day.” Instead, I got my admin work done on Wednesdays and saved the sales work for the other days of the workweek.

I wish I could tell you that a little self-reflection was all it took to release this limiting belief ... but that would be a lie. The fact is, I just got busy and I had no choice but to start tackling selling opportunities on Wednesdays. And of course, it turned out that Wednesday was just as good for sales as any other day of the week!



No single day of the week, month or year is any better or worse for sales. No day is special. Your prospect is just as likely to have other opportunities, fires to put out, meetings or other distractions on a Monday as they are on a Tuesday or Wednesday.

Think about all the selling opportunities you are wasting by believing that one day is different than other days. If you believe one day a week is “bad for business,” that’s 52 sales days or *over 400 hours of missed opportunity per year.*



If you really want to make more sales and see even greater success, make peace with the fact that every calendar day is a unique opportunity. Don't allow yourself to self-indulgently exempt yourself from doing the work because today falls on a certain calendar day.

Sales Fail Trigger 2: I Have the Wisdom to Assess My Own Behavior

As human beings, we are really, really bad at accurately assessing ourselves.

In a sales context, there are two specific areas we are constantly (and maybe even unconsciously, at this point) assessing in our business lives ... and getting *wrong*.

1. How much we, personally, are liked by our prospects.
2. How likely (or not) a prospect is to buy from us.

Any salesperson who's missed their quota or failed to meet sales projections for a period of time can look back on opportunities they felt so certain about, and identify the problem in one or maybe both of these two points. That's the benefit of hindsight.

To assess these two areas accurately *ahead of the sale*, however – that's the real challenge. That's something we fail at *all the time*.



In Goldsmith's book, he shares the results of his study of more than 800,000 people:

- 70% believed they are in the top 10% of their peer group
- 82% believed that they are in the top fifth
- 98.5% believed they are in the top half

Clearly some of those people are wrong. Actually, *a lot* of those people must be wrong in order for the numbers to make sense.

Our easy out, here, is to frame up the missed sale by believing you assessed the situation accurately, but the prospect “delayed their decision,” or “changed their mind,” or “wasn't the right person to be talking to in the first place.”

That belief is not only limiting, it's downright delusional. If we do our jobs right, we build a solid relationship with the prospect, work with them to uncover their unique problem, and present a solution that's a no-brainer to buy. If it's not a “hell yes,” then it's a no – on both sides of the sales equation.

So what are we supposed to do if we aren't objective enough to assess our own situation accurately?



First, recognize that this *is* a limiting belief.

Second, look at your CRM. What does the historic data tell you about your likelihood of closing deals and winning business?

Third and finally, get an outside perspective. Ask a trusted colleague or team leader for their insight on the sales situation you're trying to assess. [Statistically speaking](#), a direct report will be the best assessor, followed by a peer.ⁱⁱⁱ



Those three things will help you take your blinders off and reframe the opportunity. Then you will know if you need to work on the relationship or shift gears to focus your energy on a more promising opportunity.

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://www.forbes.com/sites/jackzenger/2014/09/26/when-it-comes-to-assessing-you-who-knows-you-best/#7f3f05ed7f2e>



Sales Fail Trigger 3: I Won't Get Distracted and Nothing Unexpected Will Occur

If you're an excellent planner, congratulations. An organized salesperson is a more successful salesperson.

When we make plans, we don't plan on distractions. We *can't* plan for the unexpected. No task management system in the world can help you schedule for interruptions.



We do our best, of course. We schedule in buffer time between meetings and calls. We leave for face-to-face meetings 15 minutes earlier than Google Maps says to. We tackle our most pressing, important, urgent tasks first thing in the morning before the day gets away from us.

Disruptions still happen, but we are a bit more prepared for them when we plan this way.



One area I see salespeople slacking on, though, is updating their CRM. I get it. You have a lot of sales meetings and calls, and it's easy to think that you'll remember all those details later. It's easy to think you'll remember who to follow up with.

If you don't keep a good, accurate set of records, you'll definitely let sales fall through the cracks.

And you are not keeping good, accurate sets of records if you're not updating your CRM *after every sales conversation*.

So shove this limiting belief that you'll "have time later" under the rug and leave it there. Don't count on time later for this critical task. *Do it now*. I guarantee it'll pay off in sales.

This limiting belief applies to our customers, too, actually. When you have a great sales meeting, it's easy to forget that buyers are human like the rest of us. They can get distracted, delayed or even change their mind because of other (unknown to us) factors in their business.

The lesson for us salespeople, here, is the old adage "the sale is in the follow up." Expect that the unexpected will happen in your customers' lives, and follow up with them regularly.



Sales Fail Trigger 4: If I Understand, I Will Do

I read a lot of books on sales, take a lot of sales-related courses and listen to sales-focused podcasts. My bet is you do the same. After all, the better we get at sales, the more sales we make, the more money we make, and so on. There's real, tangible benefit to self-improvement in the world of sales.

A limiting belief comes into play, here, too, though. We fall victim to believing "if I understand it, I'll do it."

Just because you understand something doesn't mean you'll *do* it. We can stuff our heads full of knowledge, but until we implement what we've learned, that knowledge is all but useless.



So before you spend valuable selling time going to another seminar (or listening to another audiobook on sales, or joining another coaching program ...), honestly assess your situation. Did you apply what you learned at the last seminar? Look over your notes. Are there techniques in there you haven't applied? Tasks you haven't done? Have you really, honestly *done the work*?

If you know that you haven't – if you discover that you're an information hoarder (Like me! Guilty!) – you might need to adjust your schedule to spend more time *implementing* and less time stuffing your brain. In other words, spend more time having sales conversations and less time flying to seminars. At least for a little while.



Sales Fail Trigger 5: I Shouldn't Need Help and Structure

Your success comes from your own special blend of talent, wit and superior customer understanding. Right?

Hold that thought.

You might have a “special sauce,” but that doesn't mean that best practices don't apply to you.

If we're already experiencing sales success, we can be skeptical or outright dismissive of simple and structured solutions. We start ignoring the best practices of our industry or company because we think we know better.

Here's the deal: We can't succeed on our own.

Benefitting from instruction and structure doesn't mean you're weak. It means that you're humble enough to accept that you might not know everything, and smart enough to listen and apply what you learn.



Just because a solution appears simpler than what you're doing doesn't mean it's ineffective. And vice versa, just because what you're doing is complex (your special sauce) doesn't mean it's more effective than a simpler solution.

Continuing education benefits everyone in every line of work – but I believe it might be even more beneficial for salespeople. Why? *Because our markets are always changing.* Our contacts are always changing. The companies we sell to are always changing. Keeping yourself open to instruction can only help.

In Zen Buddhism, they call this “beginner’s mind.” It means having an attitude of openness, and lacking preconceptions. Maintaining this mindset prevents you from isolating yourself and disconnecting from the supportive environment around you.

Needing help and being open to new structures and processes doesn't make you a bad salesperson. In reality, these things can only serve to make you *better* at what you do.



Sales Fail Trigger 6: At Least I'm Better Than...

Comparisonitis is a disease ravaging the ranks of salespeople around the globe. And we tend to contract it a little differently than people in some other fields do. Instead of feeling inadequate, instead of developing imposter complex, we compensate for and recover from failures by believing *at least we're better than so-and-so*.

Better than our colleagues. Better than our peers. Better than our competitors.

Unlike Sales Fail Trigger 2 above, though, this belief doesn't just attack the humility section of our mindset. This belief instead *lowers the bar for your success*.

And it seriously undermines your real sales potential.

When you lower the bar for success, motivation and discipline go out the window. You actually construct your own success ceiling!



Plus, this belief triggers a false sense of immunity. You might have failed, *but at least you're not the worst in the world, right?* This eliminates accountability and responsibility, and stunts your growth as a salesperson.

To overcome this limiting belief, you need to replace it with something more productive. Instead of shoving failures under the rug or simply dismissing them, look at every failure as an opportunity for growth.

This is your opportunity to ...

- *Raise* the bar for yourself
- Identify new areas needing improvement
- Analyze your environment. What were the contributing factors, and how can you change them next time?

Failure is often our best teacher.



Sales Fail Trigger 7: I have All the Time in the World

For the most part, we salespeople don't struggle with this very much. We have skin in the game, and we know that sales periods cycle through pretty fast.



Where this limiting belief tends to come into play is at the beginning of a new sales period. For me, this is the beginning of each quarter, just after I've finished my quarterly report. For you, it might be a seasonal sales period.

We naturally snap out of slacker mode pretty quickly, I think, because we have quotas to meet. But even that little bit of slack time can cost us. So let's banish this belief, shall we?

The first day of a new sales period is as important as the final day. *And the end of the sales period will be a lot less stressful if we remember this!*

Let's face it. We often underestimate how long it will take to get a deal done. Remember from Sales Fail Trigger #2, we're not great at accurately assessing our own situation.



Rather than keeping the right amount of pressure on the buyer from the start, we coast a little at the beginning of the sales relationship ... and then we start to feel anxious 30, 60 or 90 days out when the deal still isn't done.

How much more would you sell if you shifted that urgency by even 10 days?

Dismissing Limiting Beliefs Takes the Cap off Your Sales Potential

After reading through the seven most common limiting beliefs in sales, how do you feel? Were there any “aha” moments for you? Any opportunities for improvement?

My guess is you have *lots* of opportunities for even greater sales success. After all, you were smart and driven enough to read this guide all the way through!

Remember, though, that *understanding* is different from *doing*. So if you've identified limiting beliefs from this guide, it's time to go implement what you learned.

