

The Experts

Interviews with the brightest minds in business

Lisa Peskin

The Keys to Sales Success



Lisa Peskin is the CEO and founder of Business Development University (BDU), a sales and sales management training, coaching and consulting company. She has more than 30 years of experience in sales performance and management, and has developed an award-winning reputation as a motivational and results-oriented sales professional.

Q: What do you see as the keys to sales success?

A: The first key is filling your pipeline with qualified prospects on a consistent basis. That includes maintaining your existing customer base, as well as upselling and cross-selling, and then finding some new prospects coming into the pipeline. We know how someone's doing based upon the level of their pipeline.

Q: What's important once you've identified those prospects through the pipeline?

A: Next is process. Once you've got a prospect in front of you, what's the process that you take them through? That goes from running an effective first meeting, gathering key information, presenting your solutions, handling any objections and closing the business.

Q: Is there a metric to judge the effectiveness of that process?

A: I know how someone's doing based upon their close ratio or win ratio, which is number of quotes of proposals to number of sales. If the number is south of 30%, then I know there's some tweaking that needs to be done with the sales process to increase that close ratio.

Q: How else does attitude matter in sales?

A: If you're the average salesperson making business-to-business calls, you're going to get seven no's for every three yeses. The yeses are a whole lot of fun, but the no's aren't easy to deal with psychologically. You have to be strong enough to deal with that.

Q: What else is important?

A: To be really great at sales, it's about your head and your heart. It's attitude and motivation, and I consider this half of the battle. Am I willing to do what it takes to be successful? Am I committed to doing it day in and day out, week in and week out, month in and month out? In sales, the reality is we never get to take that relaxing breath. We're only as good as our last month, our last quarter or our last year. So to be successful in sales, you've got to be willing to do what it takes and be committed every day, week and month.

Q: But obviously there are good things about working in sales. What appeals to you?

A: It's funny, I say why wouldn't everybody in this whole wide world get into sales? You can make an unlimited amount of money, and you get to meet new people all the time.

