

Help People Buy

The One Sales Thing



Mark Moore

www.helppeoplebuy.com

The One Sales Thing

Finding the "one sales thing"

This document provides a simple diagnostic tool to get you moving on the correct path to sales improvement.

But don't let its simplicity fool you. If you action it, you'll find great value to your team and to your sales.

Objective

We're going to quickly identify the one thing - the priority improvement area to make the most impact on your sales (or non-sales) teams performance and results.

How

We'll use intuition above scientific analysis so that we can quickly determine next steps. If you want a more scientific approach to know how to get the best from your team, [get in touch](#).

Here's how this works: You may have heard of the productivity book "The One Thing" by Gary Keller. He explores the idea that there is always one thing above all others that will make the most impact on your desired results.

Of course there is - I've used a similar idea for years to help people accelerate their learning. Because the road to sluggish performance begins with the wrong learning decision. Or rather unwittingly making the wrong choice of what to spend resources learning next.

Most people are likely to get this decision wrong and spend resources learning something that even if they master it, is relatively low impact on their results. A high-cost, low-ROI move.

To accelerate learning (and performance, results and the rewards that follow) it's useful to consider that a chain is only as strong as its weakest link.

The weakest link sets the overall strength, no matter the strength of the strongest links.

In your teams approach to sales, you and your team have a weakest link. Something within your control is putting a glass ceiling on your team's efforts and sales results.

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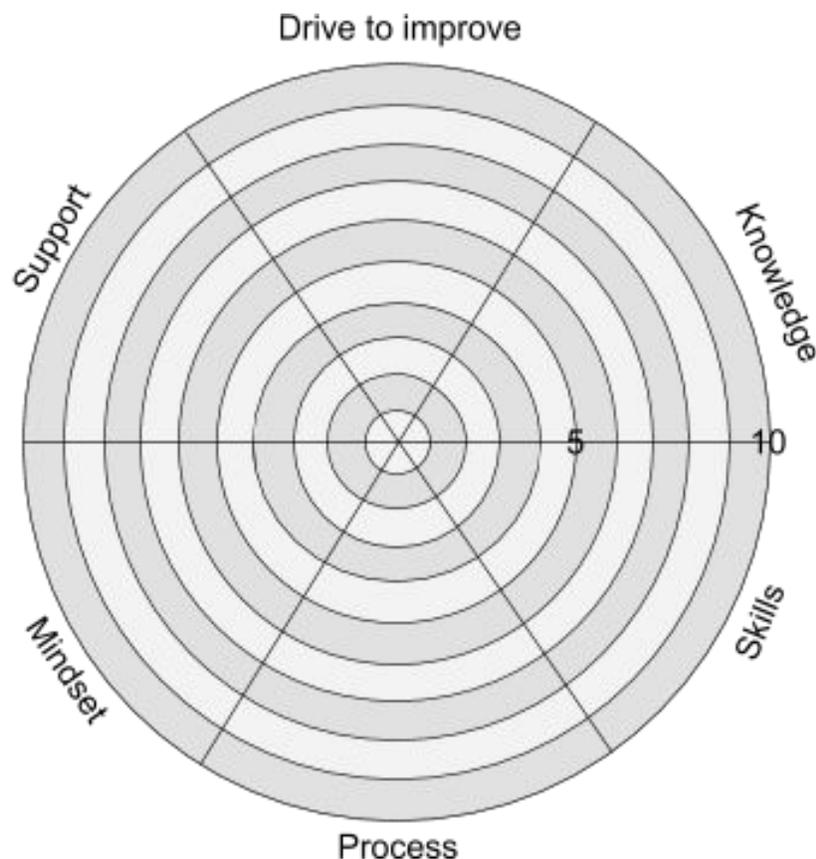
There are six vital sales elements, or pillars if you like, that work in orchestra with each other to determine your sales success. You should find which is your weakest and costliest link.

Then ask yourself, “is this the one thing, that if we measured and improved it, would make the biggest impact on our sales?” If you think the answer is ‘yes’, then *x marks the spot*.

You’ll want to look into ways to improve it, and sooner rather than later.

The Sales Wheel

(a larger, rounder wheel means you’re rolling quickly towards improved sales)



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You could print this off and fill it out, or knock up a back of a beer mat version. It's useful to complete it for your team as a whole, but you could optionally use it for each individual.

Here's how to think this through: Give yourself a 0-10 score for each element. Remember, the value comes not from the scores themselves but how they compare to each other. You're looking for the weakest link and the area that you believe would make most impact.

The following pages help you think each through to arrive at an initial score.

Drive to Improve

Perhaps the most costly mistake made when putting on sales training is to assume that your people will learn and translate learning into permanent new behaviours. But no one catches a ball if they don't want to catch that ball. Let alone run with the ball, shoot and score.

Our experience shows strongly that anyone can learn to sell, or improve how they sell, *providing they want to learn* and will put the effort in. I call this "drive to improve". It's essential.

You'll find it hard to score your entire team as each person is unique. But the important thing is to ask yourself who in your team would embrace improvement, and want to drive their performance whilst minimising discomfort and frustration whilst selling too.

You'll need to sell them on this first - and get sincere rather than superficial buy-in before expecting to see performance improve. You can [talk to us here](#) if you want some ideas to help achieve this buy-in.

Note, you might also want to ask yourself where you're at if you employ a team of customer-facing people who have little desire to improve their service and value to customers.

Drive to improve score 0-10: _____

Knowledge

Another costly mistake is assuming that your sales people just need to learn sales skills.

Between the time I started consulting in 2003 and now, I would say that 99% of organisations I have worked with have limited their sales success because their people lacked easily-learnable knowledge. This information about their business, products, services, right questions to ask, and information about how and when their buyers buy and what they tend to buy next should all be documented, easily accessible, and learned.

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Get clear on this - the 'knowledge' element is relatively easy to improve. You need to know what knowledge is required to best help your people to sell. There's must-know, should-know and could-know knowledge. And in the name of efficiency, some of it should be learned at the point of need - "just in time" (JIT), rather than "just in case" (JIC).

We can help you develop an accelerated knowledge-acquisition plan for your team that starts them learning the magic 20% that will help them get 80% of their results. And we have tools to help them rapidly shift 'the knowledge' into their long term memory ready for recall. [Get in touch for more.](#) For now, put a score on the knowledge level of your team - not their technical or subject-matter knowledge, but their knowledge on all the information they need to enable the sale.

Knowledge score 0-10: _____

Skills

You could take the weakest link idea and apply it to the vital skills that work in orchestra with each other to enable exceptional sales performance. For example, your exceptional questioning ability is worth zero if you can't establish rapport and trust in the first place. In this case, improving rapport would enable your questioning to shine.

Equally, great rapport is something many people can achieve, but they haven't a clue about asking sharp questions to help customers think and become empowered to make valuable buying decisions.

[Our full diagnostic process](#) helps you determine which relevant sales skills you have and can leverage, and which you'll need to improve.

But to help you put a score on this, consider this list of sales skills: people skills, rapport, emotional intelligence, the psychology of buying, questioning, listening, switching between big picture and detailed conversations, resilience, persistence, time/self management, account management, creating and managing buying-tension, exploring value, problem solving, empathy, confidence, assertiveness, presenting solutions, opportunity creation, qualifying, and helping people to make decisions.

These are all learnable skills. Some are more relevant to your team than others. And it's worth considering what would happen to your sales results if your team improved them?

Again, we can help you find the top 20% that will make 80% of the difference to you and your customers, and we can help you create a strategic learning and development plan for your people to acquire and improve these revenue-generating skills. [Get in touch for more.](#)

Skills score 0-10: _____

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Process

Your people may have the skills, the knowledge and the drive to improve. But without a proven sales process, they'll lack direction, clarity, certainty, and consistency.

The process includes the tools and software you use to create and manage your pipeline. It includes not just a sales process but your customer's buying process (which informs your sales process). And it includes your engagement and conversational process. There's a way to structure conversations that results in maximising win:win value to both buyer and seller. The conversational process can be fully consultative maximising mutual trust and respect.

We've seen many times the effect of people coming off their pre-designed process, and experiencing the costs of doing so. And we've seen the wins that come from helping the buyer methodically through the process. [Get in touch](#) to learn more.

Is everyone in your team clear on where they're at in the process with each lead or customer? And do they know what they need to do next to move each opportunity forwards?

Process score 0-10: _____

Mindset

Somewhere around 70-80% of sales performance challenges tend to be mindset related. How your people think about sales determines what they're going to say and do.

For years I've emphasised the idea that everything you do either takes you towards the sale or away from the sale. But I've revised this; everything you **think**, say or do takes you towards or away from the sale. It all starts with the thinking.

Much discomfort from selling comes from how we've learned to think about sales by encountering bad, pushy or dishonest salespeople. The default mindset for many is anti-sales, which sabotages behaviours that help customers potentially gain value.

The bottom line is that no buyer wants a nervous, uncomfortable, apprehensive sales person assisting them with an important purchase. They want someone who can confidently guide them and help them to think it through credibly.

Your people score highly on 'mindset' when they have a healthy high-value sales mindset. They know that buyers want to buy in the way they want to buy. They know that *the right buyers* are better off with their solutions than the status quo and their money in the bank. They just need to help the right buyers identify themselves and figure this out too.

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They also know the purpose of a business, how selling works in both theirs and their customer's business, how to maximise value to both, and how to steer conversationally towards this. And they're proud of maximising the value to customers in this way. They score low if the idea of selling freaks them out or they think they're being self-serving, pushing or taking from their customers.

You and your team should make no mistake - the quality of your sales-thinking is directly proportional to your sales results.

Mindset score 0-10: _____

Support

Last but by no means least (although commonly neglected) is 'support'. Specifically support for *continuous improvement* of sales.

People don't tend to accelerate improvement at sales unless they have **ongoing consistent support**. A force needs to be applied to them in order to see increased movement. Of those who don't have ongoing support, some may improve organically (at an average pace that might not match that of your competition), but many will develop and share bad and costly sales habits that leave plenty of opportunities on the table for their competition to scoop up.

If you're not growing, you're probably deteriorating. If you're not getting ahead, you're falling behind.

It takes a very unique and self-driven individual to roll their sleeves up and tackle the learning and performance improvement process effectively all on their own.

The majority of people trying to improve unsupported fall down numerous holes in the 'learning pipeline'. From not developing enough drive to learn through to failing to find an efficient approach to building 'sales muscles', staying committed to improve, and being able to identify objectively where they need to improve. It's why successful sports people have coaches to spot, observe, reflect back, offer objective guidance, and hold them accountable.

And these sales problems are minimised or eliminated similarly by the right support from leadership, or from a sales coach.

It matters less where this support comes from (if you can build the internal coaching capability sufficiently you'll have a self-improving engine which should be an ultimate goal). The main thing is to ensure that you have the mechanism within to competently drive continuous sales improvement of your people. Many people claim they coach sales. Few get high-performance from those they coach. But there is a learnable approach to achieve this.

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Sales leaders should not be selling. They should be fully focused on improving how their team sell. (And until they can do that, they should be learning how to do that.) And this requires a systematic, structured, well targeted, repeatable observation and coaching process, which anyone can learn to design and implement.

Score yourself on how robust and effective your continuous support is to your people selling (whether it comes from internal or external, the key word is *consistent*), so that the saw is always being sharpened and the results reflect this. If you want help with that, [get in touch](#).

Support score 0-10: _____

“If you want to teach, to change minds or to cause action, a consistent curriculum is always better than a single event. Drip by drip, with enrollment.”

– Seth Godin

Next Steps

Once you’ve scored your team or individuals up depending on how you’re using this tool, it’s worth shading the wheel in to get a visual which suggests which way to lean.

Pick out the weakest link in the wheel, and ask yourself, “is this the one thing, that if we measured and improved it, would make the biggest impact on our sales?”

If you think it is, then **x marks the spot. You’ve found your improvement priority.**

It’s worth scheduling to attend to this focus area right now. What gets scheduled gets done. And in sales, what gets forgotten or neglected, costs dearly.

Unless your sales are rocketing sky high and, consistently growing, then there’s room for improvement. And ‘x’ is likely to be your most efficient and effective route to accelerate this.

Each of the six elements has a number of useful and valuable solutions that have worked for other businesses and can work for yours too.

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Each element has easily learnable solutions that can be implemented by willing and competent leadership, and we have had the pleasure of helping top global firms including McKinsey, Apple and Capgemini to implement these, as well as numerous other smaller businesses.

We can probably help your business in the same way.

LEARN TO SELL the right way

For more information on how we might help you and your business, and to discuss anything from within this initial diagnostic tool, please get in touch.

You may also like to check out the other resources on www.HelpPeopleBuy.com and sign up to monthly articles to help you and your team learn effective ways to sell.

Visit
www.helppeoplebuy.com

“Give me six hours to chop down a tree and I will spend the first four sharpening the axe”

- Abraham Lincoln