



Sales By PIÑATA

And **5** Other Strategies To
Eliminate Now
For Growth, Credibility & Profit

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Entrepreneurship is an exciting adventure that requires courage, passion, fortitude and discipline. Whether you're a solopreneur working out of your home or one who has a team of employees, the ability to communicate, take action, demonstrate effective leadership and face your fears is critical to your success.

Below are six traits and strategies that are all too common among entrepreneurs that sabotage the very results they seek. Read on and see where you might make a shift in order to spur your own growth and realize greater business and personal growth, credibility, and profits!

1. Sales By Piñata™

Go to a party (or You Tube for an even funnier visual) and watch a piñata activity. You'll see happy partiers standing in a circle watching one person hold a piñata at the end of a stick, while another person is blindfolded and given a stick or a bat to hit the piñata with in order to break it open for candy to fall to the ground. Sometimes the blindfolded person is turned around 3 times and then turned loose to try to hit and break open the piñata. As you can imagine, it makes for some funny -- but sometimes painful -- optics as the person swings the stick hitting everyone and everything in its path if they're not paying attention.

Now take that image and think of some salespeople you know. You know the ones ... they are "blindfolded" one hitting everyone within 3 feet with their "stick". There's no rhyme nor reason to their effort. They just want to "hit" (pitch) someone so the "candy" (i.e. money) will fall out ... into their pocket. Yeah, probably not the most effective way to close that sale! If you know someone like this (maybe quite intimately), then it's time to shift this strategy to a more effective process.

First, who is your ideal buyer/client? How old are they? What gender are they? What do they value? What is their urgent need? Create an "avatar" of them -- the perfect example of who you can best serve. Being intentional about your business -- especially knowing who you can best serve with your offering is critical.

Second, know what you're going to say about what you offer. Get clear about what you deliver and who you can best serve. This often takes some work to nail down, but when you really get clear on this, it will resonate for you at the heart level, and it will do the same for prospects who can fit within your client parameters. In other words, you want people to "get" you, and that happens when you are clear and focused and can communicate your value with ease and confidence.

Third, learn how to build rapport with others so that they will trust you to want to know more about what you do either for themselves, or so they will have a comfort level to refer you to others they know who could benefit from what you offer. Don't just throw up your offer on people as soon as you meet them. Ask questions about who they are, what they love to do, what their goals are. In other words, build a connection before you even think about telling them what you do or what you offer. There's plenty of opportunity out there, but having strong communication and rapport skills will be critical for you in order to build trusted relationships that pay off.

Fourth, leverage technology. There are many new tools emerging to help you pinpoint exactly who your customers are, who is seeing your online presence, what they are attracted to, and much, much more. From simple social media posts to more complex but highly effective sales funnels, you can leverage a variety of tools that can grow with your business - and your budget!

In general, prospecting is not an event; it's a process. Unless you're working at a retail store, rarely will you meet someone buys from you on the spot. Develop a relational mindset and skill set so you can engage

and inspire trust with your network, and you'll have plenty of opportunities to acquire a steady stream of clients for a growing, profitable business!

2. Not Keeping Your Word

Think about the people you respect in your life. Why do you respect them? One of the most notable qualities of people who are held in high esteem are those you can count on to do what they say they are going to do.

Whether you make a promise to someone else or to yourself, every time that promise is not kept, you chip away at the level of trust in that relationship. If it's you that you break your word to, then be aware that each time you do so, you chip away at your own self-esteem.

In a world of casualness, self-importance, "busy-ness", and lack of responsibility, those who keep their word on whatever they commit to will stand out in a positive light, whether it be showing up on time for an appointment or calling someone as a follow up to a sales call when you promised to do so.

So how well do you keep your word? Try an experiment this week: no matter what, keep your word on everything you commit to this week. If you don't want to do something, then don't commit!! If you find yourself having difficulty saying no, so you just say yes to get someone off your back with no intention of following through -- access some courage, have some respect for the other person and yourself, and say no. Be up front and polite and simply decline -- you don't have to be rude about it.

I believe that if you are mindful about your commitments and demonstrate it by keeping your word, you will find yourself feeling stronger, more on top of your life, energized, and earning the respect not only of others, but of yourself - and that, my friends, can lead to many wonderful new opportunities!

3. Avoidance

Let's face it, many of us do it in one form or another. We avoid. We avoid doing the revenue producing activities that will build our businesses. We avoid difficult conversations. We avoid facing our obligations and debts and ignore them when we cannot pay as committed. We clean our house, do the laundry, organize our offices, hang out on Facebook and pretend we are "working". We write, rewrite, tweak, "make pretty pictures" for our Internet presence and then do it all over again - all to avoid doing the "uncomfortable stuff".... or as I would call, **WORK**. What do I mean by work? It can include any or all of the following:

- Sales Calls
- Follow-Up Calls
- Appointment Setting
- Billing and Collections
- Creating and/or launching an offer
- Accounts Payable (otherwise known as Paying Your Bills)
- Dealing with a Difficult Client
- Handling Unfinished Business
- Launching your website
- Having difficult conversations
- Creating and Launching Your Material on Social Media
- Making a Decision to Leave one Job/Career for Another and Doing It

These are just a few examples of what doing the "work" is. Think about it -- everything that you are avoiding and hiding from takes energy. Add all the pieces up and I think you'll find it to be quite draining! It's amazing how freeing it is when you tackle something you have been avoiding or procrastinating on, and just doing it! Most of the time it's not as bad as we think it might be!

Here's a suggestion: Face your FEAR, not Face-book. Face FEAR, not FaceBOOK!! Get off Facebook! Face your fear and pick up the phone. Face your fear, write your draft, and put it out in the world. No, it won't be perfect, but it will be done. Imperfect action is what counts; progress, not perfection. Start your momentum and tweak as you go. If you're really having a hard time with this, then find at least ONE action you can take to

conquer your fear daily. Maybe it's calling one person to follow up with or schedule a time to connect with someone about your business. You know what you're afraid of and what you have a hard time with -- identify it and then commit to taking it on in small pieces until you're ready to tackle the next issue.

Another thing you can do is make a list of everything you can think of that you have been avoiding. Schedule a block of time to handle at least 3 of them -- pick one hard one, and 2 easier ones. Identify a reward for yourself for getting them done. If you want to kick it up a notch, identify a consequence of not following through.

To take it to the next level, you could choose an accountability partner who will hold the line with you, and let him/her know you are going to take a designated block of time to handle at least 3 things you have been avoiding. Let them know your reward and your consequence based on your result. Ask them to check in with you at the end of that time block. If you complete your goal, then follow through on receiving your reward. If you don't, then follow through on the consequence.

If you're not sure how to deal with this or manage through it, get yourself a good coach who can help you. You are not alone in this and there are plenty of others who will support you if you just reach out and ask. Have courage and do the work!

4. Trying to Be Someone Else

Modeling successful people is a great thing. We can learn a lot from watching others and doing what they do and learning from their mistakes. That being said, copying someone else is a different matter.

Each of us brings our own experiences, talents, gifts, expertise and personalities to this place we call "Earth" and we are here to BE ourselves. Too often, I see eager new professionals or coaches or people in general imitate others or pretend to be something they are not. They think that their facade works, and that those who are watching or interacting with them are not aware of the misalignment with who they really are and who

they are trying to be. They're wrong. We see. We see the incongruency and insecurity. We feel something that just feels "off center".

When we are not ourselves, we will attract those that are not really our authentic "tribe" -- and that then fuels fear of being "found out" and all those other related fears. Further, the staying power of your audience/tribe may be impacted in the long run because you will not be building a strong foundation to begin with -- the most foundational element being YOU.

Therefore, a big part of building a business is understanding who you are, what you stand for, and who you are here to serve. Take the time to go deep and do the work.

5. Having Too Thin a Skin

You know what I'm talking about. Our culture loves to create weaklings and victims. We see it in universities with "snowflakes" -- twenty-somethings who need time out rooms when someone challenges an opinion or simply says something they don't like. We witness it when someone gets "offended" by another who disagrees with him or her and can't hold a rational conversation.

In the business world, it shows up like this:

1. A disagreement, criticism or a challenge to your opinion or work causes you to retreat, ruminate, or complain to others, instead of being able to handle it (i.e. articulate a counter position, take the feedback gracefully) and move on.
2. Showing up defensive and acting as though you have to explain yourself to everyone.
3. Looking for reasons to be offended.
4. Expecting others' to read your mind instead of learning how to ask for what you want or need.
5. Overdoing the "self-care" card. "I'm just so stressed/busy, I have to go take a "me" day (for the next three days....)". Come on. Chances are, you really don't. It's amazing what you can do and handle when

you acknowledge the strength you have instead of magnifying how sensitive and fragile you are.

OK, I know what you may be thinking ... "but I'm a 'sensitive' or a 'highly sensitive' soul". Fair enough. It just means you get to figure out your unique way to protect your energy and build up your inner strength.

Toughen Up. Get a Grip. Get to work. Quit choosing to be offended. It's a waste of energy and a bad choice for elevating humanity.

6. Allowing Yourself to be Surrounded by Mediocrity or Those Who Are Not Supporting Your Success Path

You've probably heard it: You are the sum of the five people you most hang out or surround yourself with. Income, attitudes, beliefs, language and presence are all affected.

Think about it. Who do you spend the most time with at work, at home, socially. They may be coworkers, employees, team members, family members or relatives. Which ones are the ones who are truly honest with you? Which ones speak TRUTH (yes, there's a difference between someone telling you what they believe and telling you TRUTH). Which one challenge you to be better? Which ones encourage you to follow your dreams? Which ones are like the lobsters in the tank at Red Lobster trying to pull the ones back down who are trying to get out of the tank? Upgrade your network if you don't like what you see.

Is it hard to make this kind of change? Yes, many times it is, but here's the thing - you can have a straightforward conversation with those who are not in the positive category. You can set boundaries, teach them how to support you, give them examples and then hold the line. If they don't (or can't) honor your boundaries or meet your standards, then remove yourself. You can still love them, but distance yourself so you can make the space for a new support system to develop. You may be surprised at how much more energy and feelings of wellbeing emerge when you do a network uplift.

So there you have it. Six strategies you can implement that will give you more energy, build your confidence, make you more attractive, help you make more money, and strengthen up your spirit! Take them on, and prioritize your life to support the purpose for which you are on this planet!

About the Author

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Alison Haugan is a pioneering entrepreneur, strategic business coach, network marketer and speaker.



She has spent the last 16 years as Co-Founder and President of a nationwide, satellite-based communications provider, OptiStreams, Inc., which was ranked #140 on Inc. Magazine's Inc. 500 fastest growing privately held companies in America list for 2004.

She coaches and works with entrepreneurs (and wanna-be entrepreneurs) and professionals who are ready to “up their game” to take their business/career to the next level, increase financial stability and reserves, reduce stress, and leverage their personal power for stronger credibility, career advancement, and vision achievement.

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