

## Chapter 1

# The Seven Deadly Sins of Sales

### **The Seven Deadly *What* Now?**

Let's get one thing clear right up front: the seven deadly sins of sales are a sight different from your good old traditional seven deadlies. We're not going to be talking about your gluttonous or lecherous ways in this book, y'all. You can deal with those on your own!

When it comes to the seven deadly sins of sales, we're honestly just talking habitual mistakes we all make as salespeople.

Now, I know that folks—me included—don't like to be told they're making a mistake, because no one enjoys feeling like a screw-up. Committing a sin, however, is something you don't always realize you're in control of. Sinning, you see, is often simply a matter of poor discipline.

The goal here is to re-create a new and *different* kind of habitual discipline, one specifically designed to keep you from committing these particular seven deadly sins. That's what this book is all about.

Getting right with this new level of discipline is what's going to make the key difference in your business. We're talking about the difference between making merely enough income to subsist as a salesperson and making the rock-star, six-figure income you heard about back when you first had stars in your eyes over the idea of living a commission-based lifestyle.

You know what lifestyle I'm talking about. It's the one you read about in that first Craigslist ad that promised you \$100,000 in your first year. Yes, you fell for that ad—you know you did! And then you actually got into sales and found out it's a whole lot harder than anybody told you.

The reality is that it's hard to know what you're doing well and what you're doing wrong in our profession, because there's not a great mentor or apprenticeship system out there. I mean, you know how to do *some* things, and you might be doing them moderately okay. But surely you could be doing some things better, don't you think?

No one wants to be mediocre, but if you're letting the seven deadly sins of sales flourish in your business, mediocrity is where you'll stay. If you want to be *super*, well then you've got to get back on the wagon. And you've got to practice exercising your new discipline until it simply becomes second nature.

## **The Path to Redemption**

So if we're not talking gluttony and lechery, what exactly *are* the seven deadly sins of sales?

The chapters ahead will break them down for you one by one. We'll discuss what each sin is and what kind of problems it creates in your business. I'll also teach you simple strategies and tricks you can use to develop the discipline you'll need to banish that sin from your business *and* your life.

Before we launch into Sin #1 in the next chapter, let's take a quick look at all the sins together so you have a sense of the territory we'll be covering from here on out.

### ***Sin #1: "I" syndrome (Ego over substance).***

There's a reason this is the number one

sin—because if you count the number of times you say the word “I” in the course of a single day, presentation, or phone call, you’ll realize exactly why people are tired of talking to you. Stop letting your ego sabotage you! In this chapter, I’ll help you reconnect with how to talk *to* people and not at them.

***Sin #2: The morning after (Abandonment).***

Yes, yes, I know you meant to call those past clients and talk to the people who did business with you once upon a time. The path to hell is paved with good intentions, as they say. And the path to redemption is paved with working those contacts and clients you spent so much time and effort winning over in the first place!

***Sin #3: Settle down, Francis (Misplaced sense of urgency).*** This is the sin of acting like your hair is on fire at all times. However, there are few situations for which you should have your hair set on fire. We’ll discuss when to grant a situation a high sense of urgency and when to dunk your head in the tub and settle down.

***Sin #4: My, that's a high horse you've got there (Cherry-picking).*** Cherry-picking is strategically—or *not* so strategically—deciding with whom you will or won't do business. Not only does this possibly put you in conflict with federal and state laws, but it can also destroy your business if your particular selection of clients suddenly fails to perform.

***Sin #5: Fish or cut bait (Aversion to loss).*** Learning not to cherry-pick with whom to work is one thing, but being afraid or unable to remove a poisonous person from your life is something entirely different. Yes, you'll give folks a fair shot, but if it turns out they can't behave themselves, then you have got to learn when and how to cut your losses and move on.

***Sin #6: Cut the bullhockey (Fluff and puff).*** This is not 1985. Glamour, my friends, is gone. Today's consumers don't want a false fantasy; they want facts. It's not just time to tell the truth; it's time to understand that telling the truth is the most powerful sales tool you have.

***Sin #7: Put your horse before the damn cart already (Inverted priorities).*** We all know we're supposed to put God and family before business. However, salespeople have a bad habit of putting business first, because if they're not selling, they're not getting paid. It's not long before "it's only one phone call" or "it's just this one delay" can turn into you letting your life pass you by without actually living it. And *that* is the real tragedy here.

And finally, we'll wrap up with a good hard look at how to put your new discipline into practice at the next level: by building stronger relationships with everyone in your life, from your clients and your teammates to your family.

## **Confession Is Good for the Soul**

Remember when I said that you weren't alone in committing the seven deadly sins of sales?

Yeah. My name is Leigh Brown. And I, too, have sinned.

I was never good at typical networking—you know, the cocktail-hour thing. But I have always been good at reading, absorbing, and understanding how data affect an environment. That’s why my sales continue to increase, no matter what’s happening in the market—because I work to make sure I understand the overall schematics.

When I started seeing other sales professionals making the same mistakes over and over again and hurting their businesses in the process, I couldn’t help but start to put two and two together and shake my head. “Mmm mmm,” I said. “Look at Jane. She’s fluff-and-puffing it even worse than ol’ Hank down at the car dealership.”

And yep, you guessed it. It wasn’t long before I realized *I* was making some of those same mistakes myself. Not only that, but even since I’ve remedied them, I’ve still fallen off the wagon of good habits from time to time, just like everybody else.

Look. Nobody’s perfect. But if we suck up our pride a little and commit to being the best version of ourselves we can possibly be, we can kick these seven deadlies to the curb where they belong. And if we do happen to fall off the wagon every now and then,

we'll know exactly how to pick ourselves up, dust off the dirt, and get right back up there.

And speaking of sucking it up, our first stop along the way is a timely reminder that there's no "I" in "team."