

America's Top B2B Sales Expert for Foreign Companies

WHY SALESPEOPLE FAIL

Top
10
Reasons

Learn the Mistakes that Most Foreign Salespeople Make When Trying to do Business With American Companies and **How to Avoid Them.**

By Nick White

Top 10 Reasons Why Salespeople Fail by Nick White

I've worked with hundreds of sales teams in the US and dozens of sales teams from China. When I ask Sales Managers why salespeople fail they usually say things like "the salesperson isn't hungry enough" or "the salesperson doesn't work hard enough" but from what I have seen, neither of these are the problem.

Most salespeople want to succeed but they rely on luck hoping that they will be lucky enough to win that new customer they've been dreaming of but sadly, few get lucky.

The number one overall reason why salespeople fail is a lack of skill. They haven't been given the right tools to win. They don't realize that they are stuck in a role where they think like the salesperson instead of thinking like the buyer.

In this book, I will give the top 10 reasons why salespeople fail so that you can learn what you might be doing wrong and why it's hurting your sales. My goal is to get you off of the wrong sales activity path on the right path that leads to sales success.

This book is a very short and condensed version of one section of our sales course that we teach in-person in China. I hope you can study the details and information provided so you can also see an improvement in your sales and consider meeting me at the next sales training session in China.

Why Salespeople Fail

1. Not Finding the Right Buyer Chapter 1
2. Using the Wrong Email Strategy Chapter 2
3. Your Image Needs Improving Chapter 3
4. Sending Junk Emails Chapter 4
5. Offering No Value Chapter 5
6. Not Understanding American Business Culture Chapter 6
7. Too Much Small Talk Chapter 7
8. You Don't Sound Like a Winner Chapter 8
9. Relying on Short Cuts Chapter 9
10. Lack of Support for the Salesperson Chapter 10

Let's Get Started!

WHY SALESPEOPLE FAIL

Chapter 1 Not Finding the Right Buyer

Typically when I start working with a factory in China, I ask the sales team who are their target customers so we can review this list. Next I ask to see their sales efforts they have done and most times I see these two main mistakes:



1. **Sending emails to the “info@” email for the customer.** For example, you are trying to win business with Grainger or Walmart and you are sending emails to “info@Grainger.com” or “info@Walmart.com” which 99.99% of the time will never get seen by the category manager/buyer and never get a reply other than perhaps an “automatic reply” which has no value to you.
2. **Sending emails to multiple contacts in the company who are not in-charge of your category.** Many times they were able to find the email address online or since they know the email format such as “first initial/last name@” then they email these people. When I ask “how do you know this is the buyer for your products” the sales team will tell me they don’t but they found the person on LinkedIn and since their title is something like “Buyer, Merchant, Merchandising Manager”, etc. then they took a chance that one of the people they are contacting could be the right buyer. When I tell the sales team not to do this they usually say “why not? There is no harm in emailing this person even if it’s the wrong person but actually there is potential harm.”
Let me explain...

Let’s say that Vicky is a sales person for a factory in China that makes pillows and she wants to do business with Walmart. When she searches on LinkedIn she can see the buyers for Walmart but it just says “Category Merchant” but doesn’t say which specific category they manage. So Vicky makes a list of 8-10 people who work for Walmart with this title, using the typical email format she starts emailing everyone on the list.

Unknown to Vicky, she is introducing her pillow factory to the buyer for lighting, camping, alcohol, clothing, etc. The problem is that it only takes one buyer such as the alcohol/liquor category to say “I am not the buyer for pillows so this is just SPAM email” and then this person forwards Vicky’s email to their internal “SPAM” email such as “SPAM@Walmart.com” and now after this, all emails from your company with the same ending, the Walmart email server will put into their SPAM folder. Please understand it doesn’t matter if you change the email address from “Sales2@ZhejiangPillow-Company” to “Sales8@ZhejiangPillowCompany” because all emails from this same company are now identified as SPAM and the buyer never sees them.

In my training course, I have so many screenshots from buyer replies inside all these retailers and it shows how the buyer received my email with an automatic sentence from within their internal server saying “this person is not in your contacts. If it is SPAM, please forward this email to “SPAM@____.com” and it’s that simple.

Now your company is in vendor jail and you will not be able to contact the buyer but the salesperson, sales manager and owner thought "Go ahead and contact anyone you can in the company. What's the harm?"

Now you know the potential harm is a lot.

As a Sales Manager or Company Owner, instead of setting a useless goal for my salesperson to just do routine work such as "You must email 100 customers per week". Even though this work results in little or no-replies the managers still demand it feeling good that they see this type of copy & paste emails going out. Personally, for any sales person who reports to me, I would rather have them spend time to do more research and verify we are contacting the right person and then customize that email for that right person. For example:

Now your company is in vendor jail and you will not be able to contact the buyer but the salesperson, sales manager and owner thought:
"Go ahead and contact anyone you can in the company What's the harm?"

1. **Mentioning the company name in the subject line** – this will increase your chances of getting your email read because most buyers will look at this subject line and perhaps in the preview pane of the email make a decision in 3-5 seconds if they will read the email or ignore it.
2. **Mentioning the Buyer's Name** – when a buyer sees the email begin with "Dear Customers" or "Hi Boss", they know it's a copy & paste solicitation email and not written for them.
3. **Mentioning the Customers Item Number** – When you email the buyer saying "We were looking at your item #____ and item #____ and we make similar products as well as some best-selling products that could compliment your current product line" the buyer feels more obligated to read and reply to your email. The American Business culture thinking is that the sales person took the time to research our company and write a personalized email so I should also take the time to reply.

So now that you understand how important it is to find and confirm the right buyer for your products before emailing them, how can you do it?

When you find a Merchant/Category Manager on LinkedIn but it doesn't say which category they manage, here are some ways for you to get the information:

- **Look at the Companies they Follow** – at the bottom of their profile, it shows which people and companies they follow. If I were selling BBQ grills and I'm trying to find the Lowe's Buyer who has their own private-label brand and also manages the national brands of BBQ grills, let's say after searching profiles on LinkedIn, I found a category manager who is following some of the National Brands such as Weber, Traeger and CharBroil, there is a very high chance that this is the person I want to contact.
- **Look at their Activity** – Many times the buyer is already connected to your competitors and have a relationship with them so they will comment on any posts or events your competitor listed on their LinkedIn and all this will show on the buyer's activity history.

- **Look at their Endorsements** – If we use the BBQ grill example, the buyer should have endorsements from the salespeople who work for the national brands and possibly your competitors also. This means a very high chance you have the right buyer.
- **Follow the Customer Company Page and look at their past posts** – Many times the company will show something such as “we had our Outdoor Living Team attend the National Hardware show and _____ who manages BBQ grills did a great job planning our event...”. I have found many buyers through information such as this that I found in the company posts.
- **Ask for help** – Do not be afraid to contact someone at the Executive Level but be careful. You can email a VP of Merchandising for example and ask them “who on your team should I work with for...” but do not try to “sell” the VP with a long email or you have no chance. Say “we supply ___ and we have some valuable information to share with the correct person at Lowe’s. Who should I work with?” That’s it. The normal way is to send all the information to make the VP “interested” but actually your long email gets ignored or you might get a reply “I forwarded your information and if the Category Manager is interested, they will contact you”. Since you gave all your company information, there is no need for the VP to put you in contact so you are now in Vendor Jail. The sales person is so excited and emailing the VP thanking them and then weeks later they start chasing the VP “such a pity no reply from the buyer”... Don’t do this unless you really want to irritate the VP. Better for you to send your brief email offering valuable information so it forces the VP to put you in contact with the buyer so you can provide this to them directly. Also imagine your increased chances of writing back and forth with the buyer when the VP has introduced you. **Remember the rule in sales: it’s always easier to walk down a ladder rather than walk up a ladder.**

These are just 5 of the top Pro-Tips to help you find the right buyer. In our Sales Training Courses we do in China, we spend over 2 hours on LinkedIn strategies going deep in-depth on how to utilize LinkedIn to make more correct contacts, how American Buyers think, what to do and what not to do so you can eventually win more customers.

WHY SALESPEOPLE FAIL

Chapter 2 Using the Wrong Email Strategy

Now that you know the importance of finding the “right” buyer, you can increase your chances of getting a reply and getting to the next step if you contact them the “right” way.

I don't know you but I am sure that if you are a factory in China, your email strategy is wrong which is why you get such a small percentage of replies from big target customers in the US.



Most sales teams in China that I work with show me their contact history with the Buyer and there emails are making some critical mistakes such as:

1. Long Emails
2. Attachments
3. SPAM Trigger Words
4. Copy & Paste Emails
5. Using the Wrong Contact Frequency

Let me explain the problem with these one-by-one.

1 - Long Emails: Because most salespeople were never taught how to get the attention of the buyer or how to create interest, they think they have to give all the information on their entire company in one email hoping “this” will have enough information to interest the buyer. The salesperson doesn't consider the buyer isn't looking for new suppliers usually and thinks they are happy with their current supplier so as soon as they see this long email, they are not stopping their day to invest their time to read this email. They can see it is a solicitation email and the email is all about the company. There is an important rule to learn when you are contacting target customers that you do not work with yet and the rule is... Long emails get ignored or deleted and short emails get read and replied to.

Here is another problem with your long emails. Salespeople often complain that they don't understand why the buyer doesn't reply and after I look at their email I say “why would the buyer reply? The buyer now has ALL the information about your company in the email”. It's better to quickly create interest by mentioning the main benefit why customers choose your company to create just enough interest that they want to take the next step with you.

2 - Attachments: Most SALESPEOPLE rely on the company catalog to sell for them so they send this in every email with the famous words that all Chinese suppliers say “please have a look and let us know what you want...we will give you the best price, best quality and best service”. Not only would the buyer not believe this statement but the buyer most times isn't even seeing your email. Because you have an attachment and if the buyer has never replied, you increase your chances of having your email delivered into the SPAM folder because the customers email server says: “Nick has emailed this person before but Bob (the buyer) has never replied and with this large attachment it could be SPAM”. Until you get a reply from the buyer, try to not send a catalog. Remember, you should have a link to your company website in your signature so if the buyer is interested, they will look at your website to learn more and if they are really interested, they can request a catalog from you and now you have your reply so you can start communicating with the buyer.

3 - SPAM Trigger Words: Many times the salesperson is just trying to tell the buyer that if they want any samples we can send them “free” but the word “free” will trigger the customers email server to put your email in their SPAM folder. Say you can “provide samples at no-cost” rather than use the word free. Also avoid words like “hot sale” as (1) we don’t talk like this and (2) it sounds more professional to say these items are some of our “best-sellers” or “best-selling items”.

4 - Copy & Paste Emails: Most SALESPEOPLE in China will copy and paste the same email to every target customer on their list and this is a huge mistake. They hope by sending enough emails month after month, they will get a few customers to notice them but they need to understand that with emails you get better results if you focus on quality instead of quantity. I would rather get out 10 emails per day (50 per week) that are customer-specific than 300 emails per week that are copy & paste and offer no value to the customer. If my quality 50 emails per week have a 20% response rate I will get 10 replies that week but if my 300 copy & paste emails get a 1% response rate, then I’m only getting 3 replies that week. Quality emails means I have researched the customers website, the buyer on LinkedIn and am able to mention something specific about their company that shows them this email was written “just for them”. When you do this, you will see the amount of replies double or triple leading to more next steps and eventually more new customers.

5- Using the Wrong Contact Frequency: Some salespeople will email a target customer on Monday and then Tuesday send another email saying “no answer from you...such a pity” and this is a big mistake for several reasons but mostly because you cannot assume that the buyer has so much free time to get to your email the day you sent it. If you email them the next day, it is considered too aggressive. In our sales training camps in China, I provide the SALESPEOPLE with 2 email campaigns which contain a total of 22 emails but I instruct them to wait 5-7 business days (don’t count the weekends) between sending emails. This is more than enough time to respect the buyers time but not too long that they forget about you.

The goal of your email is to create enough interest with the buyer to open-the-door to you and get you to the Next Definable Step. (NDS)

STOP TRYING TO SELL BY EMAIL

Consider every company and industry has a different sales cycle. The definition of sales cycle is (1) steps needed and time it takes from first contact with a target customer to (2) the time when the customer pays you in full.

The definition of a **sales cycle** is: **(1)** the typical steps needed and **(2)** the typical amount of time it takes from first contact with a target customer to the time when the customer pays you in full.

So if your target customers require multiple steps before the sale such as:

- Factory audit
- RFQ form
- New vendor form
- Sample approval

Then why are SALESPEOPLE trying to use email to sell if we know we can’t send one email and get an order?

Your email must be short and to-the-point. Remember the rule in sales: Short Emails get read/replied to and Long Emails get ignored and deleted.

Most target customers you want to do business with will say “I’m happy with my current supplier” so knowing they are not “looking” for any new suppliers and knowing that as soon as they see your long email and recognize this as a solicitation email, why would you expect them to take the time to read it?

A good short email has this basic structure:

1. **The buyers name** (but eliminate all the polite unnecessary greetings...it’s not rude at all and will increase your chance of getting read)
2. **What you do** – Something like “we are a unique supplier of (product name)”. Do not mention how many years in business, your factory certifications, how many employees, how many square meters your factory, etc. unless you want to keep getting ignored.
3. **The Benefit** – Here is your value statement and why the buyer should be interested to learn more. In our training we teach how to develop your USP (Unique Selling Proposition) even if you think you do not have one.
4. **CALL TO ACTION** – The CTA can be done many ways but you must stop saying things such as:

“If you are interested please let me know”

“If you see anything in our catalog you like, we can give you the best price, quality...” (you sound like every other supplier)

“Tell us what you want and we can make it”. They already have existing relationships with current suppliers they trust so if they “want anything” new they will go to their current suppliers.

“hope to get your good news soon”.

A real CTA gives the buyer a quick either/or choice for example: “Would the next step be a factory-audit by your sourcing office or would you first like to check our pricing?” This gives the Buyer and “A” or “B” Choice and sometimes the buyer replies to “correct” you and say neither A or B but C such as: “Hi Nick, actually the first step is for you to fill-out this New Vendor Form attached...”

Make sure you end all emails with a strong CTA. In our sales training courses we give the attendees many CTA’s for them to use.

The frequency of how often you contact buyers is almost just as important as the content of your contact. If you send the Buyer an email, you get no reply and then wait a month to email them again, it’s too long and they will not remember your previous email.

Oppositely, if you email your target customer on Monday, get no reply so you send another email on Tuesday, you are viewed as being too pushy or aggressive. Studies have shown that the right amount of time to wait is 5-7 business days and then if no answer, you can email them again.

If you send the buyer a request to connect on LinkedIn and they accept, consider yourself lucky because many buyers avoid connecting with foreign SALESPEOPLE that they are not currently doing business with. The reason is because they know the moment they accept, the buyer will blow-up their LinkedIn inbox with solicitation messages.

The best way for you to use LinkedIn is not to sell (this annoys US buyers) but instead to bring attention to your emails and/or create awareness. So you can use LinkedIn the same way I use the phone. When I call US buyers they almost never (97%) answer their phone because they use the voicemail to screen messages.

So my voice mail message might be just to let them know who I am, what we do and I might say "I think my emails have been going into your SPAM folder so as soon as I hang-up I'm going to resend so it will be at the top of your mailbox". This way, if I was in SPAM the buyer can pay attention but if not the Buyer feels a little more obligated to reply. You would do the same thing with a LinkedIn message that would sound something like this: "Hi Bob, This is Nick with Ningbo Tech Co., Ltd. I have some valuable information to share with you but I think my emails are going into your SPAM folder. I just emailed you again. Could you check?". If you add more information to your LinkedIn message at this time, about your company, products, history, etc and add unnecessary greetings and small talk, you will get ignored by the buyers of big customers.

"Hi Bob, This is Nick with Ningbo Tech Co., Ltd. I have some valuable information to share with you but I think my emails are going into your SPAM folder. I just emailed you again. Could you check?".

WHY SALESPEOPLE FAIL

Chapter 3 Your Image Needs Improving

One study concluded that 75% of buyers, after reading your email, will look-up (1) your company website, (2) your Alibaba Page or (3) your personal LinkedIn profile BEFORE they decide if they will reply to your email. So you can see this is pretty important.



I tried working for a big Chinese company that used an email address that matched the website for their parent company. As you know in the US, if someone works for a big company like Walmart then all employees emails will end in “@walmart.com”. Because of this, US buyers will look at your email and type that URL into their web browser. So in this case, the buyer would not see anything to do with my products but with the parent company (even has a different name) and it’s investors so this causes confusion and another reason I was getting little replies. When advising the company they felt my suggestion (and others) were not needed so I saw no reason to continue trying to work for them when they had so little flexibility or understanding of these things.

WEBSITE/ALIBABA RECOMMENDATIONS

Improve the English - your website should have great English because if it is bad, then the buyer’s thinking is “if I can’t understand the information on their own website, how many misunderstandings might I have when trying to work with them”. Invest in a native-speaker of English to review your website and not only correct it but write it in convincing English, like talking to a friend.

Replace Stock Photos – Stock photos on your website/Alibaba page send a message to the buyers: (1) **FAKE** – we are a scammer, (2) **POOR** – we couldn’t afford a photographer and (3) **HIDING** – we don’t want to show our real company because we must be hiding something. Eliminate these thoughts in your buyers by putting real company pictures on your website. No more board meetings with white people which are clearly not your staff. If it’s important to show you have meetings, take a real picture of your real team in your real meeting room and buyers will feel you are honest and genuine. Eliminate stock photos of handshakes, customer service people with headphones and anything else from the internet.

Stock photos on your website/Alibaba page send a message to the buyers:

1. **FAKE** - we are a scammer,
2. **POOR** - we couldn't afford a photographer and
3. **HIDING** - we don't want to show our real company because we must be hiding something.

Use Real Profile Pics – I see so many profile pics of SALESPEOPLE in China that are clearly not them. Either they use a model as their profile pic or they use a picture of a white person they found on the internet. The salesperson is thinking this will make the American buyer feel comfortable but actually it is the opposite. You might not like showing your picture and might think you are unattractive but remember this is business, not a dating site.

Smile in Your Profile Pics – I challenge you to do like I showed my last sales training attendees. We went on LinkedIn and looked at the employee profile pics for a large company in the US and they were all smiling. We did the same for a major telecom company in China and all of their profile pics looked so serious. This is fine for selling only in China but if you want to sell to the US, American buyers see your serious profile pic as Unfriendly and Hard to do Business with. You want to look like a friend not a criminal who has just been arrested. You might think this isn't important but trust your American friend Nick on this one.

Before you change and improve the above, please do a favor for me: Be sure to track and know your current percentage of replies you get from your emails. Then make the above changes and see the percentage of replies you get from the next 90 days of emailing and you will see these little changes can make a little difference and in sales...The Little Things Add Up to Big Things.

WHY SALESPEOPLE FAIL

Chapter 4 Sending Junk Emails

All SALESPEOPLE in China that I work with have the same complaint that they send so many emails to American buyers but get so little replies. So I ask the SALESPEOPLE to show me the last 10 emails they have sent to their target customers.



These emails all look and sound the same:

1. No mention of the buyers name or company name in the subject line
2. The buyers name is not used in the beginning of the email but rather just says “Dear Customer” or “Dear Boss”.
3. The email has small talk and greetings at the beginning.
4. Instead of being about the buyer’s company, it’s all about your company...how many years in business, square meters, workers, production, etc. hoping this will create interest but...it doesn’t.
5. There is no benefit offered just “attached is our catalog” and “if you see anything you like...” but there is no reason for the buyer to reply.
6. The email has no clear Call-To-Action (CTA) but rather says something like “let me know if interested” or “hope to have your good news soon”.

The truth is that the salesperson invests no time in sending these emails but would rather copy and paste (which is why it says “Dear Customer” or “Hi Boss”) instead of using the buyers name. This shows the buyer they are not important enough to you to even write a personalized email to them but just send them the same email you send to everyone so the buyer feels no obligation to read or reply. In fact, the buyer can quickly see that this is just a generic solicitation email and they never get past the first sentence but the salesperson feels good that they were able to get out their quota of emails this month even if the reply rate is only 1 or 2% which most of those replies are from small customers.

This shows the buyer they are **not important** enough to you to even write a personalized email to them but just send them the same email you send to everyone so the **buyer feels no obligation** to take the time to read or reply.

Then after reviewing these copy & paste emails, I ask the salesperson : “why should the buyer reply? Is there anything valuable in your email that would make the buyer interested enough to reply?” Obviously not or they would have replied.

See most SALESPEOPLE in China are thinking like the salesperson instead of thinking like the buyer. Let’s consider the buyer for a moment. Usually this buyer has on average 1-3 suppliers he currently buys your type of products from. So you think “what is the harm in trying another buyer to check our products or our pricing?”. Realize that the buyer usually has 5-10 other suppliers in waiting who have already passed factory-audit or any other first steps to qualify them and they are in-place just in case the current suppliers fail for any reason so the buyer doesn’t need “another supplier” to check anything.

Also consider your offer of “checking another supplier” has zero value or benefit to the buyer. Your statement of “anything you want, let us know and we can give you the best quality, best service and best price” is the same thing that every supplier from China is also emailing to the buyer so again, why would we think the buyer has any benefit? You have offered the buyer nothing and no reason to reply to you.

This is why in our sales training courses we teach sales teams how to develop their USP, Unique Selling Proposition. You already have a unique benefit which is why customers buy from you instead of your competition so find out what that benefit is and then clearly communicate this in your USP.

If you don't have anything unique about your company then why do you win orders from new customers? Are you just lucky? If there is no benefit to the customer then these customers could be easy for your competitors to steal from you. In this case you probably just don't realize your benefit so it's time to ask your customers. You can say something like this: “Hi Bob, I just wanted to say how much we appreciate your business and the relationship we have with you. I know you have many choices when it comes to suppliers so I wanted to ask you: why did you choose our company?” After at least 5-10 of your existing customers answer this, you will start to see more clearly what your benefit is and any “pains” the buyer had with other suppliers that you helped them fix. After you have this information, it's time to develop your USP.

Your USP will sound something like this:

“We help companies like yours solve typical problems in the industry such as _____”.

Or...

“Our customers tell us, we helped them solve typical problems in the industry such as _____”.

Then you can follow-up this USP with...

“I'm not sure if you've experienced any similar problems which is why I wanted to reach out to you. I'd like to schedule an online meeting so I can explain and show you how we solve this problem and others as well as learn a little more about your business.”

You can use this USP any time you are introducing your company to a new buyer. You can use it in your emails, voice messages, online meetings, meetings at trade shows, etc.

Next try to get as specific as possible with your Dream Customers and your Focus Customers you want to do business with. Research their website and company information so you can reference this in your email. See most times these copy & paste emails didn't mention anything about the customer such as some products they sell and their item numbers or anything you found on their website to show that you invested your time to really study their company. When it comes to sending emails to your big target customers, remember that if you want results, quality over quantity. Take the time to research and craft your email to show you have invested time in this customer and this alone will increase your reply rate in a big way.

Next your CTA at the end of the email should be clear what you would like the buyer to do. You should give the Buyer an A/B choice such as:

“would the next to qualify us as a potential supplier be for you to review some samples or to first see our pricing”. See we are going to assume that the information you provided is of interest now to the buyer and he is going to move forward so we ask this A/B question which gives the buyer the illusion of control so usually they reply with one of these replies:

- A. Yes, send me a sample of ___ and ___ so I can check the quality.
- B. Yes, send me pricing on ___ and ___.
- C. No actually the first step would be a factory-audit so I have copied Helen from our sourcing office in China and she will arrange with you.

So to summarize, rather than sending emails that are clearly just copy & paste emails, at least for your focus customer list, take the time to put the customers company name in the subject line and if possible, use their name in the greeting.

NOTE: If you do not know the name of the buyer at the company you want to do business with, it means you are not spending enough time researching this information and I highly recommend before you send another email, take the time to find this person's name to be sure who you are emailing.

WHY SALESPeOPLE FAIL

Chapter 5 Offering No Value

Next please consider if you are offering any real value to your target customers.

Contacting the customer because you WANT to do business with them is not a winning strategy.

Contacting them to inform them of something you have to offer that could be a benefit to them is always a good strategy.



Here are some examples of value you could offer:

1. **Pain reduction:** Solving a typical industry problem because you have some type of unique solution. (your material, your manufacturing process, your machinery, etc)
2. **Cost reduction:** Perhaps your company has a proprietary process that increases your manufacturing efficiency or because of your unique packaging you are able to load more products in a container lowering the customers shipping costs per piece. Maybe your product or service helps the US manufacturer lower their costs.
3. **Special Promotion:** Realizing the hardest step is getting that first order from your Dream Customer you might offer them a price they cannot refuse. Let them know this is a one-time special price to help them compete in the market while allowing your company to prove yourself as an added supplier. Tell them this must be part of a program that includes at least a few other items (if possible) but keep in mind that after your company has been approved and has a vendor number, this increases your chances of winning future orders by a huge percentage.
4. **Help Selling:** Let's say that your industry has an average defective rate of 4.5% but your defective rate is less than 2%. This means if your customer buys from you they will get better reviews (or at least less negative reviews) online helping them sell more. Or maybe your product is the same cost as some of your competitors but you have more features or something that would give them a selling advantage.
5. **Help Marketing:** do you have a patented product that others cannot copy and you need a partner in the US to help you bring it to market? You could offer the customer some co-op advertising funds to help them market this unique product under their brand. Be creative and think how you could offer any marketing assistance to help you win this new customer.
6. **Exclusivity:** If your team has developed a new product or new designs that could help your customers sell more, you could offer one of these products exclusively to a new customer to help you win them. You could add that (1) there would be minimum order quantities required annually to keep that exclusivity and (2) that this exclusive product must be part of an entire purchasing program so they cannot just order this one item from you.

What value have you been offering your target customers?

Imagine how emails on any of the above suggested value-based topics will get a better response from your target customers compared to just sending them an email all about your company just like all your competitors are currently doing.

Everyone likes to say things such as “we don't view our customers as customers but as partners”. This sounds great but unless you are offering real value like some of the above points, how are they not just customers to you?

When you offer any real value to your customers, not just talk, they start to view you as a trusted partner and as someone who can help them achieve their goals.

Every industry is different because the pains of your customers are different but remember that all of them want to be successful so your goal should be to help them reach their goals as much as possible.

So your homework lesson should be to learn as much as possible about your target customers, then you can start thinking like the buyer instead of like a salesperson . The more you can think like the buyer, the more new customers you will start winning.

When you offer any real value to your customers, not just talk, they start to view you as a trusted partner and as someone who can help them achieve their goals.

Remember it's not a race when contacting customers...it's a marathon so play the long-game:

1. Take the time to research your customers.
2. Understand their pains
3. Learn their goals
4. Offer value to help them as a way to create interest in working together.

It takes more than one email so plan to email them over-and-over again, offering different value or re-wording your email so you are offering the same value but saying it in a different way.

WHY SALESPeOPLE FAIL

Chapter 6 Not Understanding American Business Culture

Not understanding American Business Culture is another big reason why foreign SALESPEOPLE will fail when trying to do business with US customers.

When I mention this to a Chinese company I'm talking to, they will often say: "Yes, we know about American Business Culture because we sell to..." and then they mention some big American Company they supply to.

Then I ask "are you working with the Decision-Maker in the US or the sourcing office in Asia" most times it is the sourcing office in Asia. Here's the Truth: If you are not working directly with the US Buyer, you really "DO NOT" know the business culture in America.

Please remember when I talk about cultural difference, I am not saying one is right and one is wrong or one is better. I just want you to be aware of these differences because as the famous quote says: "Knowledge is Power...if it's applied". So understanding these differences can help you and ignoring these differences can hurt you in sales.



TRUTH:

If you are not working directly with the US Buyer, you really "DO NOT" know the business culture in America.

So what are some examples of cultural differences that could effect your sales.

1. **Buyer's Duty:** In America, buyers feel no obligation to learn about your company.
2. **Answering the Phone:** In America, buyers use voicemail to screen their calls.
3. **One Chance:** You usually get one chance to give your pricing as a new supplier. If it's not your best quote, you think you can get the buyer to keep working with you but most American buyers won't give a 2nd chance.
4. **Relationships 2nd -** In China relationships are the basis for doing business which is why, when contacting American buyers, Chinese SALESPEOPLE try so hard to get the buyer to like them but never get replies. In America, if you want to have a relationship with the buyer you must bring value...a clear benefit to doing business with your company and then the buyer will be interested in establishing a relationship.

Let's discuss the Buyer's Duty: In China and in Europe mostly, buyers still follow an old-school idea that has left our American Business Culture. In the old days, if a buyer was contacted by a salesperson who worked for a company that supplies products such as the buyer needs, the buyer felt it as their duty to talk to this salesperson more, have a meeting and learn if this company could be a potential supplier. Consider that in the old days, there was no internet so SALESPEOPLE held valuable information that the buyer should know so they could do their job better.

In fact, in other countries if you call the company and talk to someone such as a receptionist, explaining to them what your company does, the receptionist will inform you of the person's name, title and contact information that you should work with. For almost all companies in the US, if you call the target customer and ask for the person you should work with they will reply with the same answer: "Sorry, we don't give out the names of our buyers". Now consider that most American buyers in the US, might list their title such as Category Manager, Merchant or Buyer but they don't say which category they are in-charge of making it even more difficult to connect with the right person.

But now most buyers don't have time to talk to a salesperson for a few reasons:

1. They have enough current vendors and potential vendors already in this category.
2. They feel that if they need information they can find it themselves on the internet.
3. They have more responsibilities as companies operate leaner and leaner making them very busy and trying to focus on their goals than meeting with potential suppliers.

Answering the Phone: The business culture between the US and China couldn't be more different. In China, I'll be in a meeting at the factory and one of the sales team members will get a call, step away from the conference room table and take that call. I tell them in the US, if I did this every meeting, especially when I have a customer visiting, my boss would tell me "let that go into voicemail." We don't let incoming calls interrupt what we are doing.

I've made hundreds of calls in a single-day, working my way down a customer list while tracking my results. On average, out of 100 dials, 97 times I need to leave a voice mail. Now this average changes by industry and by company size. Smaller companies, especially family-owned companies where the owner is involved in the day-to-day business, are much more accessible and easier to get a live-person to talk to compared to larger companies

So when you contact American buyers realize this is their mindset and you will have to work your sales plan differently compared to when you introduce your company to buyers in other parts of the world. You cannot simply call and make contact with the correct buyer. You will need to do more deep research on LinkedIn to find the right buyer and after you are sure this is the buyer. Imagine how different your results will be if instead of calling and asking "who is the buyer?" to the receptionist, when they answer the phone "How can I help you?" and you say: "Bob Smith please". Most times the reply is "hold on while I transfer your call".

As I mentioned before, the buyer will use voicemail to screen calls so you must get skillful at introducing your company by voice mail message. Practice this with your sales team leaving the Sales Manager or other sales team members a voice message and have them grade you. Just like we teach the anatomy of a good email in our sales training, you must use the same short & straight-to-the-point way of introducing your company that has your USP (Unique Selling Proposition) and a clear CTA (Call-to-Action). You have to give them a reason to call you back so voice mail is not a chance to sell, it's a chance to create interest.

What if the buyer actually answers the phone. Here is where most SALESPEOPLE fail again because they try selling and telling...everything about their company and the buyer suddenly says "I'm happy with my current supplier so I'm not interested" Remember that the buyer is not sitting at their desk, waiting for a phone call from a salesperson who wants to do business with them so your call is "interruption marketing". You must assume they don't have time for your call so your only purpose is to get them to give you a Next Definable Step. For example, my call might sound something like this:

"Hi Bob, this is Nick from Guangdong Tech Co, we supply ____ and we help companies like your solve problems that are typical in our industry such as _____. I'm sure you are busy so the reason for my call was to see when we could set-up a quick discovery-meeting online so I can explain how we do this, share some more information of our offer for your company and learn about your category goals to see if we can add any value. Would next Thursday or Friday morning work for you?"

WHY SALESPEOPLE FAIL

CHAPTER 7 Too Much Small Talk

In American Business Culture we are usually direct and straight to the point. This is preferred over going around the long way to make a point. Even when someone has a difference of opinion with a co-worker in a meeting, we don't pull punches to save face. We say it direct and most of us consider ourselves strong enough to handle it...in fact, it's not a big deal to get called-out for mistakes.



Most Americans prefer to be direct and to-the-point. I mention this because when SALESPEOPLE contact American Buyers, one reason they fail at getting replies is that the salesperson thinks:

1. They need to be polite: They spend so much time
2. They need to make small talk
3. They need to get the buyer to "like" them

Trying to be polite and trying to get the buyer to "like" you, is making your emails long which is why they are mostly ignored.

American Buyers are not sitting at their desk waiting for a solicitation email from a salesperson.

Consider this type of solicitation email from a typical Chinese salesperson :

"Hi Nick,

Have a nice day.

How are you?

The weather is quite cold in Chicago these days please take care of your health.

I am sure you must be so busy these days since no email reply from you yet. Such a pity.

Perhaps you don't reply to my other emails because you are thinking that you don't need another supplier but I hope you will give us the chance."

Trying to be polite and trying to get the buyer to "like" you, is making your emails long which is why they are mostly ignored.

Another reason busy buyers are not reading your emails

All of the above is not only unnecessary but the buyer quickly glances, sees no value in your email and makes the decision to ignore or delete.

You should go straight to the USP (Unique Selling Proposition), the unique benefit you offer and your CTA (Call-To-Action) and that type of short email will get read and you will get more replies as a result.

So actually your attempts to be polite and get the buyer to like you are actually hurting your success.

Go ahead and make small talk with customers you are already doing business with but when you contact a new target customer that you don't have a relationship with yet and you start your email by saying "Have a nice day. How are you doing? I heard the weather in Chicago is quite cold now so please take care to remember your health...". You lost the buyer already and they have decided not to read your email because it is not worth their time. Remember, you have no relationship with this buyer at this point and trying to make this type of small talk is not going to help you but it's just going to require more of their time which they will see you as not being valuable to them in any way. So if you want to start a relationship, quickly tell the buyer what benefit/value you have to offer (just one) and then ask them for a meeting to share more information.

So it is the same if you contact the buyer by phone or contact them by email, you must get straight to the point which is why they should be slightly interested in opening the door to you as a potential supplier and taking the next step.

The purpose of your first contact (by phone or by email) is not to sell. You cannot send an email and expect a big buyer to place an order with you. There are steps involved in the sales cycle even if those steps might slightly vary from industry-to-industry.

During the call when introducing your company to the buyer, if you try to make small talk, be cute, funny or get the buyer to "like" you, the chances that they are going to interrupt you and end the call, increases a lot.

Is there ever a time when small talk is acceptable with American Buyers?

Yes, after you have met them and especially after you are doing business together but when you are first-contacting new buyers that you have not met yet, you must skip the small talk and go straight to the point.

Many times when I ask Chinese SALESPEOPLE: "do you need the buyer to like you for them to buy from you?" and 8 out of 10 answer: "yes". This is why they send small talk, photos, long greetings, etc. to the buyer thinking that this is what it takes to get them to like you.

Buyers do not need to like you to buy from you. In fact, in American Business Culture it's quite different. I've literally had buyers who clearly didn't like me and to tell you the truth, I didn't like them either and I still got their orders because my company offered more value. Thinking they must like you to do business with you is why you are failing. Focus on providing value to the buyer, in order to create interest

No matter how many cute emails and happy greetings you send by email, there is no way the buyer is going to "like" this in any way more than the supplier they are currently doing business with and already have a relationship with and been working together many years, so stop trying and thinking this is going to give you any advantage. Your offer needs to be better not your "likeability" so that you get more replies from American buyers.

For your existing customers, go ahead and send them the following:

Holiday Greetings – This is great but don't just think of the US holidays, send them holiday greetings around Chinese holidays and use that as a chance to let them know you will be off work and share with them a little bit about this holiday in China and what most people, and what you will do.

National or World News – perhaps you saw there were bad storms such as hurricanes or tornadoes in the area your customer is located. A nice “checking to make sure you are ok” could be appreciated by your customer.

Company News – let's say your company has passed a new factory-audit or had some local recognition from the government. Perhaps you have added some new production machinery or an entire new production line or expanded the size of your building and you could share before & after pictures, this is a good way to assure your current customer they are partnered with the right supplier in this category.

Company Events – feel free to share with your existing customers pictures from your team building event and pictures from your Company Lunar New Year Celebration.

Freight Rate Changes – Yes you can use this with your existing customers to try to get them to order a little early which might work but consider large companies like Walmart and Target have a import department that handles all that and the buyer is not involved.

UP-SELL/CROSS-SELL - Most Chinese suppliers are so happy to win the order they forget an important Sales Truth: [The fastest and easiest way to increase sales is to cross-sell and up-sell your current customers compared to winning new customers.](#) Think about it: Your current customers (1) already have a relationship with you and (2) already trust you as a supplier so you have an opportunity to grow your business with them much easier than winning a new customers. UP-SELLING: You are already providing something to them now is there a way to offer them the same type of product but a more premium version or enhanced features, with a higher cost that might help them differentiate themselves in their local market. CROSS-SELLING: They already buy Product A from you but what if you contact them to say: “we noticed other customers similar to you who are buying Product A, have been able to also sell Product B very-well to their customers. Now you have a chance to sell them a new product and the customer truly feels you are a value-added partner not just a supplier because you are looking at ways to help them succeed in their local market.

When it comes to all these type of emails, I would caution you to not overdo these type of emails or you risk read-fatigue where your target customer starts ignoring your emails.

Remember, these are for existing customers but don't do these type of “small talk” emails with your target customers, the only exception might be with small, family-owned businesses that you want to win.

WHY SALESPeOPLE FAIL

CHAPTER 8 You Don't Sound Like a Winner

Imagine you have two friends. Friend A is popular, has lots of successful friends and when you hang-out together you feel good because of their positive energy. Friend B is not popular, always negative and complaining, doesn't have hardly any friends and when you are around them just a little while you feel drained.



Now imagine both friends are having a party on the same day at the same time. You can only choose to attend so which party will you choose? Most people would choose friend A because people like to be around other people who are successful, likeable, etc.

If you decided not to attend Friend A's party they aren't upset. In fact, they had so many popular and successful people there that you are the one that feels you missed something not them. Compare that to Friend B and if you don't attend their party what do they do the next day? Call you and say: "why didn't you come to my party? It was terrible because you were there" and of course this is the last thing you wanted to hear.

It's the same in business. People want to do business with positive energy people and with winners. When they hear a supplier is successful, this makes the buyer think "there must be a reason they are so successful" and now you've created interest.

FRIEND A

1. Always complaining
2. Negative view of life
3. Low-energy
4. Loser mentality
5. Few friends
6. Friends have similar outlook
7. Drains your energy



FRIEND A

1. Always encouraging
2. Negative view of life
3. High-energy
4. Winner mentality
5. Lots of successful friends
6. Friends have similar outlook
7. charges your energy



People prefer to be around Winners. It's the same in business.

I see so many emails from Chinese SALESPeOPLE that say: "Hi Bob, such a pity. So many times I've emailed you but no reply..." When you say this, you sound just like friend B and you sound desperate, needy and insecure not successful. Also there are two rules when dealing with customers: (1) Never argue with the customer and (2) Never start your email in a negative tone accusing the buyer of doing something wrong. This is like when we were children and our mom said: "I told you to clean your room 2 hours ago and you didn't". Nobody wants to hear you start your emails like this or even mention it.

Here are a few ways you can sound like a Winner to Buyers:

1. **Show Production:** On your LinkedIn posts, show production running in the background and mention why customers order from you.
2. **Show Shipping:** In your private video, show containers being loaded and explain a 3rd party story such as “this customer told us we solve problems from his previous supplier such as _____”
3. **Show R&D/QA:** Make a video tour and mention testing equipment or procedures that you use to address common problems in the industry with other low-quality suppliers.
4. **Factory Audit:** Tell your target customers how you passed this or that audit because your company has great manufacturing procedures and state-of-the-art equipment or any other advantages your factory has.
5. **US Buyer Visit:** When you get a US buyer to visit, take a picture and then edit their face for privacy but you can send this to your target customer saying...“this US customer just visited us and was so impressed by our...”

If you have less than 500 contacts on LinkedIn, you don't look like a winner. I suggest you get busy building your network. Don't send any text message or greeting with your LinkedIn request such as “hope we can connect” or “please accept...” because if you do this, you don't sound polite, you sound desperate. A request is a request and no need to explain anything. Another reason it's good to build your list even if sending requests to people who work within your target customer's company even if they are not your target buyer is because when your target buyer sees your LinkedIn requests, the APP tells the buyer how many “mutual contacts” you have with them and the more you have the higher your chance of getting your request accepted. Also make sure to connect with the people in the company at the C-Level as this only helps your chances as well but again...DO NOT MESSAGE THEM after they accept. Just be happy they will see any future information you post on LinkedIn.

Be sure you are always building your network on LinkedIn. This isn't just so you can contact your target customers but this is also so you can post about your company and buyers might see it. Don't post anything just because “it's time for another post” but strategically think about how your post can (1) give a positive image of your company being an industry leader or (2) provide your target customers with valuable information that might create interest in working together.

One post I never see Chinese sales teams do is the “I'm coming to the US and have a few appointments still available.” Let's say you are coming to the US for a trade show or you are coming for other customer meetings, you should use this as a chance to meet some other target customers who might have been ignoring you. Now the buyer sees your post and decides to email you (or message on LinkedIn) and say: “Hi Ivy, I saw your post that you are coming to the US, which days do you have available for a meeting at our headquarters?”. Of course this can be done by email also but if the buyer has been ignoring your emails, by posting it on LinkedIn you increase your chances of them seeing it and being interested. Remember, you are a winner. You are busy and have lots of upcoming meetings because your company is the best in this category and so many US companies want to do business with you so this is the image to portray and imagine how great it is instead of chasing the target customers with unanswered email-after-email, they contact you and invite you to come to their office for a intro-meeting.

WHY SALESPeOPLE FAIL

CHAPTER 9 Relying on Short-Cuts

In this Chapter we will talk about the 2 most common short-cuts Chinese companies try to make when (1) Trying to win more US Customers and (2) Trying to launch their own brand in the US.

Both of these common mistakes are simply a result of thinking it should be quick and easy which my one business mentor always says: "there's no money in EASY".



Common Short-Cut Mistakes Made Trying to Sell in the US

So many times a Chinese company will meet a Manufacturer Representative Agency (Rep Agency) in the US who says: "we have years of experience in your industry and good relationships with all your target customers." The Chinese love this because in China it's all about the relationship so they are sure they found their short-cut to success in the US.

Another such situation is that they find someone working in the industry, offer them to work for their factory because again, this person has "industry experience" and "has a good relationship with all our target customers". But sadly 99% of these relationships, one year later have proven to be unsuccessful.

You cannot rely on any Rep Agency to grow your business or brand. I've managed these agencies all over the US before but in every company, ended-up replacing them with employee sales-people. These agencies love to get more companies/brands on their line-card to show their strength but to go out and cold-call for you, generate interest and grow sales for you...they won't do it. Then why do they sign-up to begin with? I'm glad you asked so let me explain: The Rep Agency wants to be your exclusive agent in their assigned territory, hoping that your company will generate a sales lead (through trade shows, your website, Alibaba page, sales team emails, etc) and then you will hand that sales lead to the Rep Agency, so they can then contact the customer and write the order, looking like a hero to you even though this sales lead (1) didn't come from the efforts of the Rep Agency and (2) that customers was going to buy from you anyway but now you were forced to add an additional 5-10% on to the price to the customer which many times will result in a lost sale.

Another Short-Cut I've seen that is very common is when the Chinese Company Owner has a "friend" in the US and thinks "THIS" is the thing that will help them. They even tell me this is their "Brother" in the US but everyone in China uses this word too easily and I've seen these supposed "Close-Relationships" fall apart quickly. Having a friend in the US means nothing if that person (1) has no experience launching products successfully in the US and (2) is not going to dedicate the time/energy/effort required to successfully launch your Company/Brand in the US. **SUCCESS RULE:** There's no money in EASY.

Common Short-Cuts Mistakes Made Trying to Sell in the US

A common problem Chinese companies have is they are focused on finding a “short-cut” to success in the US, rather than a comprehensive strategy and plan that will require hard-work and will take time.

Think of other foreign companies & brands who have been successful in the US. Korean companies such as LG, Hyundai and Forever 21. Japanese brands like Sony, These companies are successful because they share one common trait: They came to the US with a long-term plan and failure was never an option.

I had a company in Yangjiang Guangdong who wanted to launch their own knife brand in the US, they didn't want to spend any money on advertising, wanted just to do normal social media posts and only launch their product on Amazon and after 6 months took-down their Social Media channels, liquidated their inventory and abandoned their dream of having their own brand in the US. They just didn't have the long-term vision to commit to the US market. They thought it would be Quick and Easy not realizing, if it was so easy then everyone would do it.

Similarly another factory from Xiamen wanted to launch their own brand of equipment in the US and invested around \$1 Million USD in inventory, agreed to a digital marketing/advertising campaign but after the inventory arrived, the owner changed his mind, wouldn't spend even a dollar on advertising (didn't think it was needed and said he had no funds for it) and then after 5 months, said the US was impossible and gave-up.

Compare that to another company from Jiangsu Province that launched their brand of Home Décor items, invested in both inventory and digital advertising and within 3 months were up to around \$30k USD per month just on their Amazon channel and then within 2 years around \$300k per month just on that channel and then opened-up other channels.

Another company selling hardware items was not even a manufacturer but they were really good at digital marketing, started importing a small product line (around 10 items) from China and within one year was selling around \$1 Million per month and built a brand that now retailers paid attention to and started inviting them to participate in PLR (Product Line Review) meetings to move to in-store sales where the purchase volume is much bigger.

Whenever a Chinese company owner tells me they want to launch their own brand in the US, I share with them.

There are 3 stages to starting a new company in the US:

Stage 1 – LOSS: You lose money during this period

Stage 2 – BREAK-EVEN: Your sales now cover your expenses

Stage 3 – PROFIT: You now make money every year.

Immediately I see their enthusiasm goes away when I share this hard truth. In their mind, the US is such a big market they think they should be able to skip Stages 1 & 2 and go immediately to Stage 3 and I tell them if it was so easy, every kid with a laptop would do it because there is no pain period or “investment” period to go through.

Think of body-building as a comparison to building a brand. Everyone wants instant results but it doesn't work that way. You have to start exercising daily and even though you will not see any results in the beginning, you trust the process and continue the hard work knowing it WILL bring results if you continue. Everyone wants the results but few are willing to pay the price required to get those results.

So the Chinese factory-owner will usually ask me, "how long does it take to go through stages 1 & 2 to get to Stage 3. That depends on several factors:

1. What is your USP?
2. How will your online price compare?
3. How confident are you in your products that the quality will be good and the online reviews will be positive overall?
4. How do your current customers buy?
5. What is your sales strategy?
6. What is your monthly online marketing budget USD to get started?
7. How fast you can convince ecommerce Merchants in charge of their platforms (Walmart.com, HomeDepot.com, Lowes.com, Wayfair.com, Menards.com, etc) to launch your products. Of course, I have a ton of experience doing this and know how these buyers think, what is important to them and how to get them to agree.

Now while I am saying that you shouldn't rely on short-cuts, sometimes a good connection with someone in the US who can help you move through stages 1 & 2 a little bit faster can be very helpful. That is exactly what I do for Chinese companies who want to grow their brand in the US, by pointing them to some strategic relationships.

In Sales, Like in Physical Fitness, "EASY" and "QUICK" are NOT part of the equation.

Everyone wants the "Results" but...



Few will do the work needed.



Common Short-Cuts Mistakes Made With US Warehouses

The last and most common Short-Cut Chinese Business Owners try is using a "Chinese owned warehouse" in the US because they say: "This will make communication easy for them" to which I say: "Do you want to talk in Chinese or do you want to be successful?"

First of all, after you set-up all your products in the warehouse inventory system and Ecommerce platforms (EDI), everything is automated and all reports are computer generated. In fact, the warehouse I recommend gives the Chinese company a Partner Portal so they can log-in and see real-time updates which is all about numbers not about talking to anyone in Chinese.

There are 3 main problems with most Chinese-owned warehouses:

- **LOCATION** – Most are located in LA and the factory-owner is thinking this is great because they can reach the warehouse in less time but they are thinking like the factory. Think like an ecommerce merchant. You need to be able to ship all over the country and keep your shipping costs (included in your online price) as low as possible. When 80% of the US population lives in the Eastern Half of the US, a warehouse for ecommerce sales on the West Coast is a kiss-of-death. Also others are located in big cities such as New York or Houston Texas where the real estate costs and labor costs are highest.
- **INEFFICIENCY** – Most of the Chinese warehouse boasts how they have no problem fulfilling orders but they lack the modern logistics computer programs and inventory control software needed today. I found many of them say they have it but actually are manually entering everything in their computers which leads to mistakes as well as long wait times for reports.

I have heard too many stories of failure to share in this report but now I've also been a part of many success stories using our proven plan with companies that understand (1) it won't be quick and (2) it won't be easy but as long as you take a long-term approach and stay-the-course, you will reach success.

So in summary, don't make the mistake thinking it will be easy and don't make the mistake of trying to find short-cuts that will only waste time. Develop a good plan, do the hard work over time so that your brand can reach it's full potential.

WHY SALESPEOPLE FAIL

CHAPTER 10 Lack of Support for the Salesperson

I saved the Biggest & Best for last.

Lack of Support for the Salesperson has to be the biggest.

Most companies I work with in China, hire the salesperson, tell them to contact customers in the US, set sales goals for the salesperson that are not based on anything but a “wish” number, then have meetings with those SALESPEOPLE to review their performance

compared to their goals and that’s it. The company and sales manager offer nothing in the way of real support to help the salesperson be successful so it’s a recipe for constant failure of meeting goals and a source of discouragement for the salesperson .



Early on in my career as a Sales Manager, I thought pushing the salesperson was my job but after learning from people smarter and more experienced than myself, I started viewing my job as a support mechanism for each of my SALESPEOPLE and if they fail, I fail and I don't like to fail so I got busy learning what I could do to actually impact their performance.

SALESPEOPLE do better when they are winning. Think of a school sports team you would be coaching like basketball or soccer. If your team keeps losing game-after-game, do you think the kids are having fun? Of course not. Now if your coaching, training, practicing and support of these kids leads them to winning games, how different do you think they start to feel? When SALESPEOPLE feel like winners because they are getting results, it breeds more positive results.

What type of support should you be giving SALESPEOPLE? Most times people think of just the basics such as (1) Product Training and (2) Sales Leads but Sales Managers need to provide SALESPEOPLE with the tools needed to win.

Here are my top 5 most overlooked support tools Sales Managers should be giving to their SALESPEOPLE.

- **Coaching** – this type of support is the sales manager learning & discussing the salesperson’s goals, strengths, weaknesses and opportunities. The Sales Manager should view their position as a support role looking at what tools to provide the salesperson to succeed.
- **Strategy** – looking at your top target customers and focusing on one or two each time you meet with the salesperson . Ask the salesperson to bring an updated status to the meeting. Discuss who they currently buy from, how the customer compares to their competition, any value you can offer the customer to get them to open the door to your company as a potential supplier.

- **Drills/Role Playing** – SALESPEOPLE often complain about the amount of objections they get from their target customers. I once took-over a sales team where the sales manager left suddenly and I had the team do a half-day of cold-calling at their desks so I could walk-around the office listening in on their calls. I could hear the same objection coming from customers but replied to in dozens of ways by the salesperson . In the 2nd half of the day we did training where I asked the sales team to give me ALL the sales objections they get. It was a total of 7 objections so it wasn't really so many. I then gave them the scripts on how to reply to these objections but rather than just send them back to the phones, I knew they would not perform well without practice. So as a team, we divided up into pairs and had each salesperson practice with their partner then eventually deliver this to me while I role-played the customer and eventually back to the phones to start using this with customers.

Professional sports players are the best of the best in their world yet NBA players still do pre-season practice and Baseball teams have Spring training. Professional Sports People Still Practice the basics. SALESPEOPLE are the same and it's up to the Sales Manager to help them perform at their highest potential.



Professional Sports People Still Practice the basics. Sales people are the same and it's up to the Sales Manager to help them perform at their highest potential.

Even if you don't use our sales training, make a sales training plan for your SALESPEOPLE that shows them (1) You are investing in them professionally and (2) You expect them to excel in their sales position.

Many times, SALESPEOPLE attend some sales training events, are all excited at the event and then about 30 days later are back to their same discouraging routine work with little improvement to their results. Why? In order to learn a new skill, it takes constant reinforcement. New skills take around 1 month of practice until the person really owns that new skill. Sadly, when Sales Manager/owners do not participate in the training that they send their SALESPEOPLE to, then there is no reinforcement of the sales principles learned and they are easily forgotten or never implemented so improved results are never reached. Sales Managers should always attend the same sales training that their sales team attends so everyone can be on the same page, using the same sales language from the training and be equally excited about using the new sales strategies and techniques together.

I've also noticed that so many sales trainers that are out there (1) use outdated sales tactics they "heard" from other trainers but I suspect they never actually tried them personally, (2) they give conceptual sales tips such as "you must use LinkedIn to contact customers" but they don't know or teach exactly how you should and shouldn't contact customers on LinkedIn and (3) they say bold statements in their sales training that makes them sound like experts but these bold statements many times are just bad sales advice that sounds good from a podium but does not work with Western Customers.

Some of the reasons why I am confident in our sales training camps:

1. **Not Just a Sales Trainer:** Most sales trainers spend their time training and refining their speeches but if you put them in the real world and had them actually sell a product or service to one of your buyers, most are too out-of-touch with reality to sell. That's the old saying "those who cannot do...teach". I'm actually a salesperson first and a sales trainer second. The majority of my time is spent selling to big retailers and distributors in the US so I am constantly updating my training based on what I am using to sell successfully with American buyers each week.
2. **Selling for Chinese Companies:** Some sales trainers might have sold but how many actually sell (1) for Chinese companies (2) selling to US Buyers? This is what I've been doing since 2017. I started doing this part time and then was quickly forced to make this my full-time job so I had to be successful as failure was not an option. I learned how to get results with American buyers.
3. **30+ years B2B Sales Experience:** This has given me experience in countless cold-calls and cold-emails to prospective customers and thousands of in-person meetings whether they were discovery-meetings, presentations or Product Line Review meetings. Learning what it takes to keep that target customer engaged through the entire sales process and finally say "yes" has given me an invaluable amount of knowledge that I know pass-down to the younger generation of SALESPEOPLE.
4. **An American Salesperson :** There is a secret sauce here why some Chinese companies had tried for years to reach certain target customers with no progress and then I was able to win them in a short amount of time and it's because I "think like the buyer". I teach SALESPEOPLE in China all the time to stop thinking like a salesperson , stop thinking like the factory and start thinking like the buyer if you really want to be successful.
5. **Very Tactical:** I teach a very practical and tactical way for SALESPEOPLE to work with their target customers to contact them, create interest, get the next step that leads to the opportunity, negotiate price and win the order. How many sales trainers in China actually provide the attendees with an entire email campaign (10-12 emails) pre-written 90% (allowing the salesperson to customize 10%) and even tell them how often to wait between sending each email? I'm the only one that I know of and I do it because I'm providing each salesperson with the most important data and tools to increase their chances of success.
6. **Reinforcement:** After the sales training seminars, we do live online meetings where I reinforce one or more of the training topics we discussed then open-up the meeting so attendees can talk about their progress/objections as well as ask questions.
7. **Proven:** If I told you "I have proven this selling system to work" then it's a little disingenuous since I'm the trainer so it's best to hear from other attendees directly which is why on our Social Media channels and on our website, we have videos from some of the attendees.

So let me ask you what type of support do you give your SALESPEOPLE? If you are the General Manager or Sales Manager and you don't think you need to provide support other than tell your SALESPEOPLE what to sell, your team will never be a high-performing sales team like we teach in our Sales Management Course.

If this book was eye-opening for you and you believe that our sales training could help you or your sales team, please consider doing the following: Send us an email requesting our help and information on our next training event in China. Nwhite@CastleTradeAgency.com

About the Author

Nick White has been working in B2B Sales for 30+ years and since 2016 he has been working as the US Salesperson for Chinese factories & trading companies, helping them win more business in the US.

When Nick first became a student of sales strategies and learning how to master the sales process when working with target customers, he saw his sales double in one year. Then he started teaching salespeople the selling system that changed his life. Nick quickly saw these salespeople also increased their sales and they started actually enjoying the sales process instead of simply going through the routine motions of selling.

In 2016, a Chinese factory-owner who had known Nick for years, finally convinced him to work for the factory by being their US salesperson. Nick quickly saw he was able to win orders because he could bring value to the factory as well as the US buyer he would work with.

As a salesperson working for a Chinese factory, Nick quickly learned how difficult it is for salespeople in China to make contact, create interest, work with the US buyers and finally win their business. So Nick started teaching sales teams in China what it takes to be successful when working with US Buyers. The result are that these salespeople have been able to grow their business in the US but additionally they found many of these sales strategies & techniques, work with their target customers in other countries as well.



Today Nick only works for a few Chinese companies and spend the rest of his time doing sales training and consultation work for Chinese companies who want to grow their US business.

In this stage of his career, he has reached a certain level of success that instead of just winning more orders as a salesman, it's more rewarding for Nick to help teach others how to be successful. Nick received daily messages from attendees thanking him because his selling techniques have helped them win a new customer they've been targeting.