

When most people are about to slam the snooze button on their alarm, the room for Chris Jennings' sales improvement seminar is rapidly filling up with various business professionals, including owners of companies, their managers and their employees, all of whom are interested in sharpening their sales and management skills.

It's a little past 7:15 a.m. when the personable and charismatic Jennings strolls in and booms, "OK, so how did you do this week? How many deals did you close? How many prospects did you call? Is your pipeline full?"

*By Rick Weinberg, Editor,
California Business Journal*

The Health Club For Your Business



When CEOs, business owners, managers and sales professionals need to get re-energized and refocused, they go to Chris Jennings of Sandler Sales Institute.

One after another, the sales professionals tell Jennings about their week, what went right, what went wrong. Jennings listens intently and provides insightful and analytical comments sprinkled with motivational, encouraging statements.

One participant admits that he didn't spend enough on "pay time," a.k.a., calling prospects in order to keep the proverbial pipeline filled. He also admits he might have blown a deal.

"OK, so did you drill down far enough to get to the

prospect's pain?" Jennings asks. "No, I could have gone deeper," the sales professional responds. "Good," Jennings says. "Remember that the next time."

When CEOs, Vice Presidents, Sales Managers and business professionals need to get reenergized, refocused and motivated, they go to Jennings, a nationally recognized speaker and owner of Sandler Training in Irvine, Calif.

"What we are is a health club for your business," says Jennings, who trains and consults with CEOs, business

owners, managers and sales people on a daily basis. Jennings, a UCLA grad who holds a degree in Political Science and who worked extensively in sales and marketing with Mobil Oil, uses the ideal analogy when he talks about the importance of sales professionals getting refocused and reenergized.

“If you ran two miles a day and stopped after a month, what kind of shape would you be in a year later?” he asks.

“Well, same thing with your business: you have to be prospecting and asking for referrals. You have to have a plan.

“So what we do is develop your sales skills and techniques. People go and work out at a gym to get stronger and healthier. People come here to get their business and sales technique stronger and healthier.”

Jennings’ success is rooted in his experience, knowledge and the Sandler sales philosophy, which is based on professionals being transformed into a nontraditional sales person, someone who is disarming, someone who comforts prospects and strategically gets them to reveal their problems through a series of questions.

“We help sales and management professionals get prospects comfortable enough to them tell them what’s going on in their life and their business so the sales person can uncover enough information to help the prospect,” Jennings says.

The focus of the system is asking the prospect questions, and drilling as far down as possible to “uncover the prospect’s pain” and ultimately curing it.

“We hone sales professional’s skills and help them get better at asking questions in order to get more detail from prospects,” Jennings says. “The system is built on why a prospect should buy; we reverse the roles and let the prospect sell. The system winds up turning the pro-



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spect into a sales person and letting the prospect tell you all the reasons they desperately need your help and are willing to buy at any price.”

Jennings created a comprehensive checklist that every manager and owners needs to follow to maximize the sales performance, productivity and profitability of their company and sales team. Some of the items on the checklist include Custom Sales Training Workshops, Video Role Playing, Call Recording Reviews and Training, Field Ride Alongs (with instant feedback) and a Strategic Customer Care Program.

The system works. After a recent workshop, a sales associate took what he learned from the workshop and applied it in a 9 a.m. meeting. He nailed down the sale. When the owners of a mortgage company came to Jennings several years ago, they were a small firm with 10 employees. The company adopted the Sandler pro-

gram, making it their company philosophy.

They wound up more than doubling their business every year for each of the last five years. Today, they're generating \$30 million in revenue.

The owner of a custom closet company came to Jennings with a problem: his company was growing, yet he found that his staff was doing too much free consulting. They were giving clients actual closet design drawings, but the prospect would frequently wind up taking those concepts and choosing a lower priced competitor.

"What I did was work with the owner and his sales people and help them eliminate free consulting and start to get paid for it," Jennings says.

"They also began charging for design work that resulted in better qualified prospects."

When the closet company started charging fees, it increased its closing percentages to 90%. Before they went to Jennings, they were closing at a 30% ratio and they were investing over \$1 million a year in people who never bought from them. Today, it is a thriving, multi-million dollar company.

No matter what kind of problem a business professional is confronted with, Jennings has the knowledge and experience to fix it.

"We give clients the opportunity to work out their sales issues, get stronger, and become better at finding new clients and generating more profits," he says.

CEOs, managers and their sales forces regularly come to Jennings' workshops simply to stay focused and motivated.

"Some sales managers and their sales people fall into slumps," he says. "So they come here to get back on

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track. Some people come here when they've hit a plateau and need help to get to another level because they know they can accomplish more. So my role is to help my clients implement a plan.

"Sales professionals, for instance, make promises all the time that they'll prospect and ask for referrals, but they don't follow through. So I'm like a guide, helping them focus on what needs to be done."

Every time a client walks into Jennings' workshop, he reminds them that they should be prospecting, that they *need* to be prospecting. He tells them that they have to be asking for referrals, and that they're entitled to receive higher margins.

"Many managers and sales people," Jennings says, "work without a plan on the things they should do in their work. Some have a plan, but they file it away where they never look at it. So I'm here to help them stay focused on what they need to do and how to do it more effectively and how to make the most of an opportunity."

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