

I once interviewed a gentleman for a sales position who had a long background in the industry that I was working in, had worked with many of the same types of clients that I wanted to do business with and presented himself very well. The chinks in his armor showed when he told me how he built a \$1.5-million-per-year territory (very impressive in that particular industry and time period) by prospecting and cold calling. He bragged that he had been working with many of his customers for more than 10 years. When I asked him how much business he was doing in the present, he replied that he was doing about \$350,000 annually. It was elementary to drill down and find out that he had built this great territory, stopped prospecting, lost customers to the usual attrition and had not filled his sales funnel with new prospects and new business. His plan, in fact, was to bring his business (what was left of it) over to my company and, presumably, ride it all the way down to zero. Not surprisingly, I did not hire him — and I do not know if anyone else did.

The lesson here is crystal clear: Never stop selling. Complacency is a silent killer in the sales world, sneaking up on even the most successful businesses and individuals. It is easy to fall

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into the trap of thinking you have “made it” and can coast on your current customer base. But the hard truth is, customers come and go — sometimes in bunches and often when you least expect it.

Smart sales managers and top salespeople know that the key to long-term success is to keep that sales funnel full. Always be prospecting, always be looking for new opportunities and always be hungry for growth. It is not just about hitting your numbers today; it is about ensuring

you will still be in the game tomorrow, next year and a decade from now. Remember, in sales, the moment you stop moving forward is the moment you start sliding backward. Keep selling, keep growing and never, ever get complacent. ■

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