THE D.A.M. PROBLEM WITH SALESPEOPLE

by
Bradley Hartmann

Bradley Hartmann & Company
DEVELOPING CONSTRUCTION LEADERS SINCE 2011

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Headquartered in Dallas, Texas, and led by Bradley Hartmann, we help LBM dealers, distributors, and manufacturers across the country drive predictable results through common sense and easy-to-implement systems that develop strong time management and proactive prospecting habits.

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DEVELOPING CONSTRUCTION LEADERS SINCE 2011

After 10 years of economic growth following The Great Recession—the longest period of continuous economic growth in U.S. history—the most common concern I hear from executive leaders and sales managers is this: **their sales teams are not prepared for the inevitable market softening.**

Sales teams, I'm told, have become complacent. Business has come relatively easily to their teams over the last decade.

Sales reps have not had the need to prospect for new business, so they haven't.

The concern is that "prospecting muscles" have atrophied. When heavy lifting is necessary to generate new business, sales teams will be reactive.

Success has bred complacency.

This is certainly a high-class problem—most LBM businesses have grown substantially over the last decade without disciplined prospecting—but it's still a problem.

With sales cycles (duration from awareness of opportunity to actually being paid by a new customer) ranging from six to nine months, you must initiate action in the short term in order for your benefits to arrive in the long term.

Humans beings, as we'll discuss, are not instinctively wired this way. We habitually opt for immediate gratification over our longer term interests.

And so . . . welcome to 2020.
Your team is not prospecting.

Persistent prospecting powers predictable profits.

Every salesperson should be consistently prospecting, scanning the market for new accounts that will earn him/her a larger paycheck.

We know this.

And yet, the overwhelming majority of salespeople are not doing it. There's a gap between what sales teams know they should do . . . and what they actually choose to do.

Why?
In short, it's human nature.

Human nature leads salespeople to habitually drift towards investing time, energy, and attention on reactive account management and customer service—to the exclusion of proactive prospecting efforts. It's a simple choice between immediate gratification (calling on existing customers who know you) and delayed gratification (calling on targeted prospects who don't know you).

Any discourse on how to effectively counteract human nature is worthless. Will power may work for a day or even a week, but it's not a long term strategy for success. There's simply too much evolutionary progress in our brains to overcome human nature in the long term.

So what can you do?

You can allow human nature to work in your favor to make prospecting a daily activity, sowing the seeds today for the harvesting of future sales in any economic environment.

Human nature leads salespeople to habitually drift towards investing time, energy, and attention on reactive account management and customer service—to the exclusion of proactive prospecting efforts.

PART I

The D.A.M. Problem

Your sales team is like a family of busy beavers, working diligently to construct a lodge. They're scurrying around, filling their days and weeks getting things done. There's a problem though: this lodge they're building is unintentionally blocking the flow of the river—the flow of your future revenue and profits.

To continue the beaver analogy, it's a dam problem. For you and your company, it's a *damn* problem.

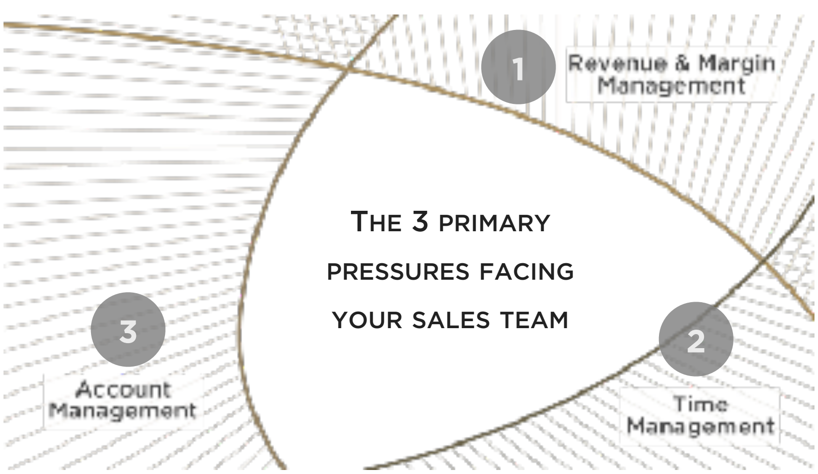
Faced with time pressure to generate additional revenue at minimum gross margins for your company (and their commission checks), sales reps **drift to account management** (D.A.M.) of existing customers instead of proactive prospecting for new ones.

Why? Let's consider the three primary pressures your sales team faces every day; the three most important elements they must manage[1]:

1. **Revenue / Margin Management**
   Each rep must manage to generate revenue at margins that yield an acceptable profit

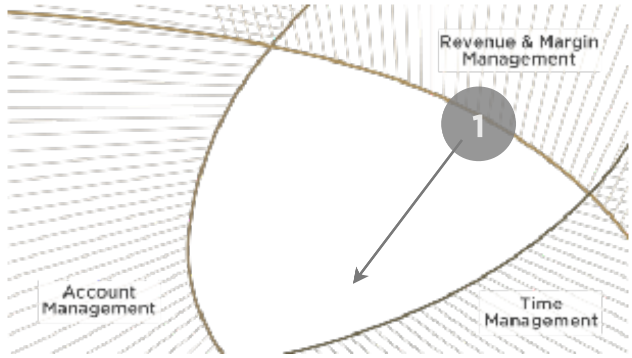
2. **Time Management**
   Each rep must manage their most limited resource: time

3. **Account Management**
   Each rep must manage the wants and needs of their existing accounts



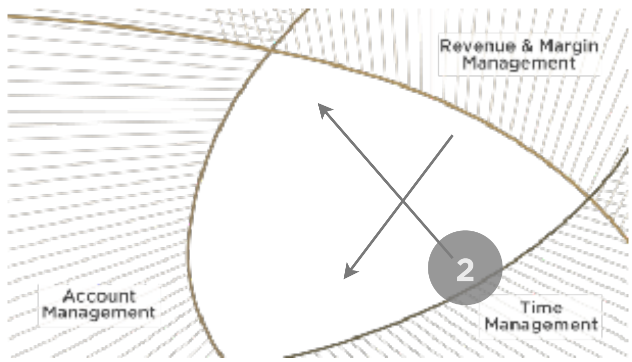
1. Revenue / Margin Management
Sales professionals, driven by commission-based compensation plans, face the constant pressure of driving additional revenue and margin.

To manage this pressure, they examine the best use of their time, focusing on short term financial survival rather than long term planning. Sales reps habitually focus on revenue and margin that will arrive next week *instead of next year*.



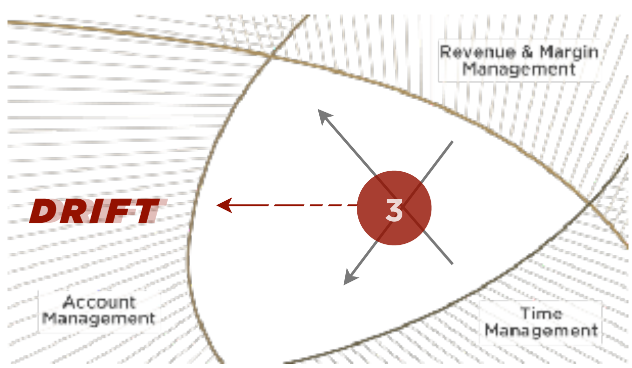
2. Time Management
Working "smarter, not harder," sales reps attempt to maximize their efficiency. Their goal is to generate the most gross profit dollars in the least amount of time.

With limited time, sales pros face a choice: interrupt a stranger and face potential rejection (prospecting) or call an existing customer who knows them. Sales pros habitually choose the former over the latter.



3. Account Management
The pressure to drive sales with a limited amount of time continually leads to the drift towards account management. Sales reps focus on existing customers and serve the role of customer service representative and increasingly, the role of superintendent.

The predictable result is **The D.A.M. Problem: the Drift to Account Management** over proactive prospecting efforts.



THE BATTLE BETWEEN LOGIC AND HUMAN NATURE IS NO BATTLE AT ALL. SMOKERS, CLEVELAND BROWNS FANS, AND NON-PROSPECTING SALESPEOPLE ALL CLEARLY DEMONSTRATE THE POWER OF HUMAN NATURE OVER LOGIC.

BEFORE WE ADDRESS THE DRIVERS OF the D.A.M. Problem, let's revisit a few fundamental principles of human nature.

First, the battle between logic and human nature is no battle at all. Smokers, Cleveland Browns fans, and non-prospecting salespeople all clearly demonstrate the power of human nature over logic.

To keep this essay under 50,000 words, I won't pontificate on the long term irrationality of smoking cigarettes or Cleveland fandom. As for sales pros (a class of which I proudly include myself), our brains evolved to prioritize immediate rewards over those expected in the future.[2] If our ancestors spent too much time planning for the future instead of hunting woolly mammoths, they'd starve.

While your risk of starvation is significantly lower than your ancestors of 40,000 years ago, you still share the same brain.

Henry Ford noted, *"Thinking is the hardest work there is, which is probably the reason why so few engage in it."*

What he didn't mention was that humans evolved to conserve energy wherever possible. And yes, thinking, researching, and interrupting a stranger with a prospecting phone call requires effort and, as we'll discuss in the next section, the risk of rejection.

While human nature is the primary driver of the D.A.M. Problem—the drift to account management—it's hardly the only one.

PART II

The D.A.M. Drivers

Here are other drivers of the D.A.M. problem. Check the box next to each that applies to your sales team.

❑ Job design for salespeople includes non-sales activities

Simply put, your sales reps engage in a host of non-sales activities. Either implicitly or explicitly, you require your sales reps to invest their time in activities that can reasonably be considered obligations of your Operations team or Customer Service team.[3]

Product inspections, customer service calls, job site deliveries, and takeoffs[4]—to name just a few—are all absolutely important aspects of your business. In and of themselves, however, these are not sales generating activities.

Yes, someone needs to do them. The choice/tradeoff you make is determining who will. When your sales team executes these activities, the tradeoff is less available time for prospecting.

❑ Human nature and rejection avoidance

Human beings are herd animals. Think back to your ancestors once more—being ostracized from the tribe likely meant a quick and gruesome death in the maw of some saber-toothed cat. Sticking together meant survival. Safety was found in numbers.

Again, times have evolved, but your brain has not.

Activities like prospecting, with a high probability of rejection, are unattractive and to be instinctively avoided. So, salespeople do just that—they avoid prospecting.

❑ Complacency

Complacency is generated from a few different sources and often in combination with each other. For starters, successful sales reps don't feel the need to fix what isn't broken.

Furthermore, many sales reps and their sales managers silently acknowledge power asymmetry—a relationship where one side has considerably more power than the other. **Sales managers often fear their top performing sales reps will take their book of business to a competitor.**[5] This results in sales managers allowing stars to run their business as they see fit.

Complacency also results from the **lack of one-to-one monthly coaching meetings** between sales managers and reps, not to mention the lack of goals specific to the value of reps' sales pipelines. Whether this lack of monthly accountability and coordination is a cause or an effect of the facts noted above is open to debate.

❑ Poor time management

If you're lucky, one quarter of your sales reps—one in four—may have the self-awareness, initiative, and personal drive to invest in themselves and find a time management system that works for them. The rest will not.

In Episode 51 of the Behind Your Back Podcast: *Navigating Your Team Around No*, we explore how to mitigate rejection through proper prospecting preparation.

Sales leaders who expect their individual sales reps to "find a time management system that works for you" are not demonstrating qualities of flexibility or adaptability—they're abdicating a core responsibility of sales leadership. This is hope-as-a-strategy in action.

Sales reps will drift to account management, so leaders must hold their sales reps accountable for weekly prospecting. Leaders must mandate a certain percentage of time spent on prospecting.

How?

It starts with an explicit focus on time management as a skill that can and will be developed.

❏ Lack of Training

Prospecting is not an innate skill. To do it well requires thoughtful training and coaching. Like the acquisition of any other skill, sales managers understand this, yet few systematically coach their sales reps to improve. The unsurprising result is that "cold calling new permit applicants" and "just driving around, looking for new jobs" become the primary methods of prospecting, if done at all.

❏ Ineffective Sales Management

Sales managers often earn their promotion due to their past success as a sales rep. Selling and *helping others sell*, however, are two very different roles.

Here are several common maladies that afflict sales teams.

- Sales behaviors are not specifically defined in a job description.
- No sales process exists to define what's to be done, when, where, and how often.
- Target prospects have not been identified.
- Sales goals for landing new business are not identified or tracked.
- Incentives do not exist to explicitly drive new business.
- Sales managers spend more time selling instead of helping their reps sell.
- Periodic assessments to align current activities with future sales are absent.
- Prospecting tools have not been created.
- Prospecting tools are not used.

How many of these apply to your business?

As long as you are being honest with yourself, consider this a positive. It's progress.

Self-awareness is the first step. Many strong, successful sales teams admit to these shortcomings as well.

There's a reason author Jim Collins identified *confronting the brutal facts* as part of his best-seller, *Good to Great*. To improve, it's imperative to honestly look in the mirror first.

PART III

The D.A.M. Solution

So that's the D.A.M. Problem and why it exists. Now let's discuss how to solve it. In partnering with 100+ LBM sales teams and coaching nearly 2,000 reps over the last decade, we've learned how to ask better questions to accurately diagnose what ails sales teams.

Too often sales consultants will prescribe that which is *best for them*—not you.

Sluggish year-over-year sales and a general lack of accountability? No problem. Let's set up three rounds of full-day workshops and get everyone through. That should solve it.

Will it?

Workshops can be effective for improving sales skills, but less so if the problem is associated with the sales process (for example, there is no sales process).

Your team may be missing out on opportunities if they do not consistently use social media in their sales process, but it won't matter much if they're prospecting potential customers you don't want to sell to. (It happens more than you think.)

To help our Behind Your Back Sales Co. clients think through their own opportunities and obstacles and create high-performance sales cultures, we developed **the C5S Sales Model™**.

High-performance sales cultures.
What does that even mean?

Good question.

We believe high-performance sales cultures are defined by clearly articulated goals and sales behaviors supported by intelligent processes, incentives, and metrics to guide progress. When these factors combine, the results—predictable sales gains—take care of themselves.

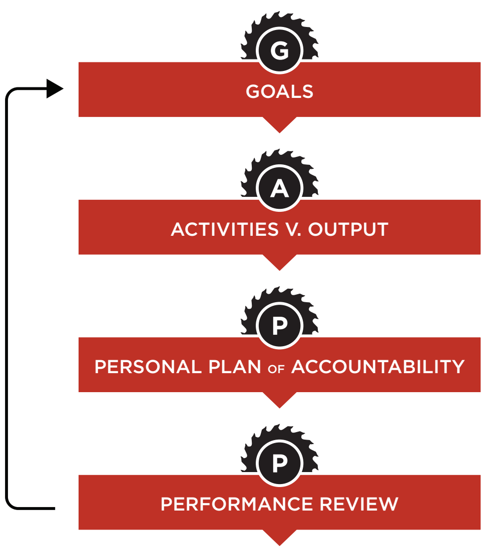
What follows is the dissection of the C5S Sales Model™ along with templates you can use immediately with your sales teams.

C IS FOR CULTURE

Culture is comprised of values, beliefs, and knowledge. This is why culture often feels ambiguous or fuzzy. Culture, however, is primarily driven by behaviors—behaviors we model, reward, punish, and incentivize. Confusion here is the enemy. Behaviors—good, bad, or otherwise—must be clearly defined and reinforced daily.

So how do we remove any confusion regarding behaviors? Culture starts at the top, so that's where we'll start too.

The **G.A.P.P. Model**™ outlines what you're doing, why you're doing it, and how it should be done. It is a common sense four-step process for articulating behaviors and achieving goals.



The imperative here is that everyone in the organization understands and embraces the information on these documents.

Again, confusion is the enemy.

Establishing goals that cascade from executive leadership down to each individual on the team does not have to be a lengthy bureaucratic exercise. We encourage clients to use the S.M.A.R.T. goals framework.

STRATEGY

Strategy, the first S in the **C5S Sales Model**™, is how we win. It's the big picture game plan that states the tradeoffs we choose to make with our capital, talent, and time.

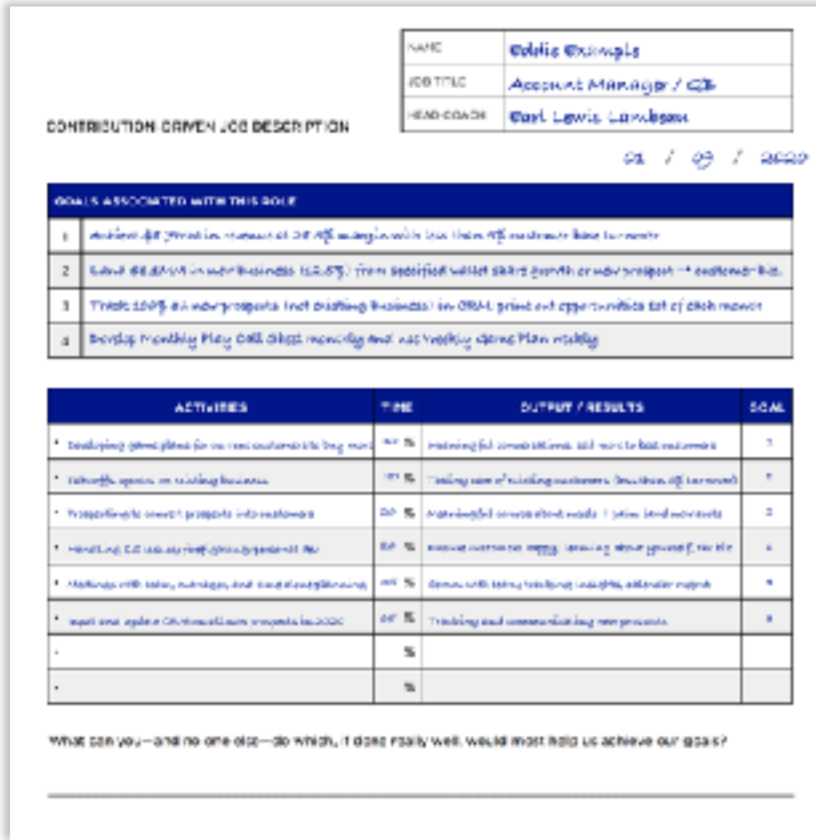
Every single member of the team must know your strategy and be able to articulate it clearly—internally to each other and externally with your prospects and customers.

Strategy guides behaviors.

Goals are what you're trying to achieve; strategy is how you'll achieve them. To this end, you can combine your goals along with specific Activities and Output from our G.A.P.P. Model™ to create what we call the Contribution-driven Job Description.

As time management is a known challenge for many sales professionals, it's critical to provide percentages to each activity.

Doing so indicates how much time should be spent on each activity. "Prospect for new customers" as a sales activity still retains significant potential confusion. "Prospect for new customers every day for at least 60 minutes" provides clarity.



By combining goals, specific job activities, the percentage of time required to engage in those activities, and the anticipated results, leaders can create a system that counteracts the habitual drift to account management by sales teams.

SQUAD

The second S in the C5S Sales Model™ is *squad*. When examining the talent on clients' sales teams, we begin with a string of questions:

- *What percentage of your team loves to sell?*
- *What percentage of your team is underperforming to their potential?*
- *What percentage of your team prefers to serve a customer service role?*
- *What are your team members' strengths and weaknesses? Do you know them? Do they know them?*
- *Do you deliberately play to their strengths? How?*
- *How frequently do sales leaders perform one-to-one coaching sessions?*
- *How frequently do formal performance reviews occur?*
- *Do team members take accountability for their own performance? How?*
- *What metrics are used to evaluate their performance?*

When it comes to developing a strong sales team, know that **top performers serve as the role model for everyone else**. The positive and negative behaviors of top performers provide a template for your team on how to act.

This point was seared into my memory with a client two years ago.

Understanding top performers are the best source of information for others,

we decided to host a 30-minute panel discussion with the highest performing salespeople during their annual sales meeting. Upon reviewing the question set prior to the workshop, we realized that none of the top four salespeople had landed a new account in the previous twelve months—despite a corporate goal the prior year to increase new accounts.

This surprised the executive team, but it shouldn't have. The compensation structure was a flat percentage of gross profit dollars (new sales earned the same commission as existing sales). New business as a percentage of total business was not tracked. Monthly sales pipeline values were not tracked. Prospecting was not specified as a required activity in their job description nor was it part of their annual sales training curriculum.

Given these facts, it would have been surprising if anyone was prospecting!

ANDY GROVE, THE FORMER CEO OF INTEL, SAID THERE ARE ONLY TWO WAYS TO IMPROVE PERFORMANCE: TRAINING AND MOTIVATION.

For each member of your sales squad, ask yourself these two questions:

1. *Have they been properly trained to do these sales activities?*

2. *Are they sufficiently motivated to do these sales activities?*

SALES PROCESS

Imagine you recently hired a new team member to help out in the yard building loads. He seems reasonably intelligent and hardworking. Would you say to him, *"You're smart and hardworking; that's why we hired you. Go out in the yard and figure out the best way to pick the lumber and build the loads and deliver them to our customers' job sites. There's lots of ways to skin the proverbial cat out there. Find what works best for you, okay?"*

You would not.
Why?

Because there is a standard process to building and delivering lumber and building materials. Allowing everyone to develop their own processes would be an invitation to chaos (yours), outrage (your customers), and Chapter 11 paperwork (bankruptcy).

You would never allow your Operations team to casually create their own processes, yet this is standard operating procedure in sales. Developing and implementing a sales process is a must. In the C5S Sales Model™, *sales process* is the longest bar for a reason: without it sales teams will eventually hit a ceiling of complexity they will be unable to break through. This ceiling of complexity is recognized by a sharp increase in frustration, stress, and overall unhappiness of the team.

Is there a single best sales process?

Some sales consultants push their own sales processes. I don't for the simple reason that you already have a sales process that functions reasonably well. Some of your salespeople follow it. Others follow their own sales process that yields suboptimal results.

This is the inherent problem—you have multiple sales processes.

When partnering with Behind Your Back Sales Co. clients, we collaborate to identify the best single sales process among the many in use and make that

YOU WOULD NEVER ALLOW YOUR OPERATIONS TEAM TO CASUALLY CREATE THEIR OWN PROCESSES, YET THIS IS STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE IN SALES.

the standard. To do this, we meet with sales reps and store leaders to process map the various sales processes being employed today. We then ask dozens of questions to pare down and optimize (we generally see a 25-30 percent reduction in sales process steps) a custom-built sales process based on what is working there already.

5-step sales process?
7-step sales process?
Who cares?

What matters is that your sales team believes in it, remembers it, and implements it. As an example in this document, we'll choose a generic (yet perfectly viable) 5-step process:

GENERIC 5-STEP SALES PROCESS

1. Prospecting Research
2. Approach + Discovery
3. Customize Solution
4. Negotiate + Close
5. On-board + Hand off

Once your sales process is complete, we link the sales activities (from the Contribution-driven Job Description, see page 11) to the sales process to explicitly state when these sales activities are to be done.

EACH STEP IN YOUR SALES PROCESS HAS DEFINED ACTIVITIES AND BEHAVIORS BROKEN DOWN INTO CHECKLISTS. IF THE HUMBLE CHECKLIST CAN HELP HEART SURGEONS PERFORM THEIR CRAFT BETTER, WE BELIEVE CHECKLISTS CAN HELP US PERFORM OUR CRAFT BETTER TOO.

SALES SKILLS

Just like shooting a basketball or playing the french horn, sales skills—the next S in the C5S Sales Model™—can be taught. This is common sense, but not common practice.

I once asked a CEO who leads an LBM manufacturing firm to describe his internal process to develop sales skills. He laughed and said, *"I hate to say it, but we hire salespeople, give 'em a vehicle, a gas card, and a laptop. Then we tell them to get after it. Crazy, huh?"*

> **I hate to say it, but we hire salespeople, give 'em a vehicle, a gas card, and a laptop. Then we tell them to get after it. Crazy, huh?**

Not ideal, I'd say, but hardly crazy. This company is not an outlier.

Like all skills, there are hard skills and soft skills to develop in sales.

Learning and remembering the top three ways your company is better and different than your top competitor is a hard skill. It can be written down, taught, remembered, and recited on command. Knowing when to best share these facts during an initial conversation with a prospect is a soft skill.

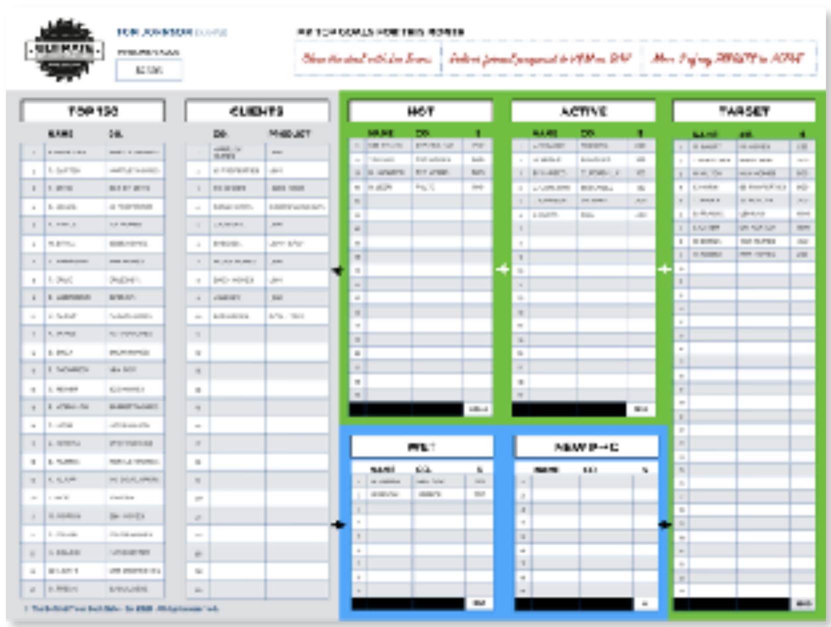
Learning a specific time management system is a hard skill. Applying it consistently throughout the week is a soft skill.

Hard and soft skills are both important, but you should begin developing the hard skills first. So how can you teach sales professionals time management?

We know will power is not enough. We also know good time management habits are built from a good time management system. The system we've developed over the years working with our clients includes two tools: the **Monthly Play Call Sheet**™ and the **Weekly Game Plan**™.

The Monthly Play Call Sheet™ is a 30-day strategic sales plan that allows each sales rep—and their sales manager—to examine their current clients and their entire sales pipeline on a single page.

Inspired by the laminated play call sheets football coaches use on the sidelines during football games, we adapted the Monthly Play Call Sheet™ for the same purpose. It's a single document designed to help us stay focused on the best opportunities this month.



The Weekly Game Plan™ is just that—a planning tool for every day of the week. A key concept that drives a salesperson's week is the intentional allocation of time spent in three activities we identify as P→C, WS↑, and ATOS.

ABBREV.	ACTIVITY	TARGET %	HOURS
P→C	Convert Prospects to Customers	20 %	10
WS↑	Wallet Share Increase	30 %	15
ATOS	All The Other Stuff	50 %	25

P→C is shorthand for the time spent actively converting **Prospects into Customers**. New sales, that is.

WS↑ stands for **Wallet Share Increase**. This is the intentional process to sell additional products or categories to existing customers.

Lastly, **ATOS** stands for **All The Other Stuff**. These are all the activities performed by salespeople that do not directly drive sales results. These include email, customer service calls, and routine internal coordination meetings.

Working with clients in our **Ultimate Coaching System™**, our monthly subscription-based sales coaching program, we routinely see sales reps misjudge the amount of time they think they spend on prospecting.

This conversation is standard:

Me: *How much time do you spend each week, in percentage terms, prospecting?*

Rep: *Hmmm, probably around 30 or 40 percent.*

Me: *How many hours each week do you generally work?*

Rep: *Around 50.*

Me: *OK, so each week you invest 15 to 20 hours prospecting?*

Rep: *(Pause)*

Me: *That's 3 to 4 hours every day. Yesterday, for example; did you spend 3 to 4 hours prospecting?*

Rep: *Umm, no. It's probably more like 5 to 10 percent, I guess.*

If you are in sales, then you should spend a significant amount of your time conducting selling activities—*not all the other stuff.* It starts with helping sales reps become intentional with their time and by prioritizing prospecting. If prospecting is an activity you do when everything has been completed that week, it will never get done.

SALES TOOLS
The final S in the C5S Sales Model™ is *sales tools*. These are things that make the job of selling easier. A helpful toolbox of sales tools should include elements that are online and off. In collaboration with Marketing, these sales tools should be presented like a menu at a restaurant —allowing each rep to consider all the tools available for him and determine which one (or which combination of tools) would be the most persuasive method to use with a specific prospect.

Here's an abbreviated list of sales tools:

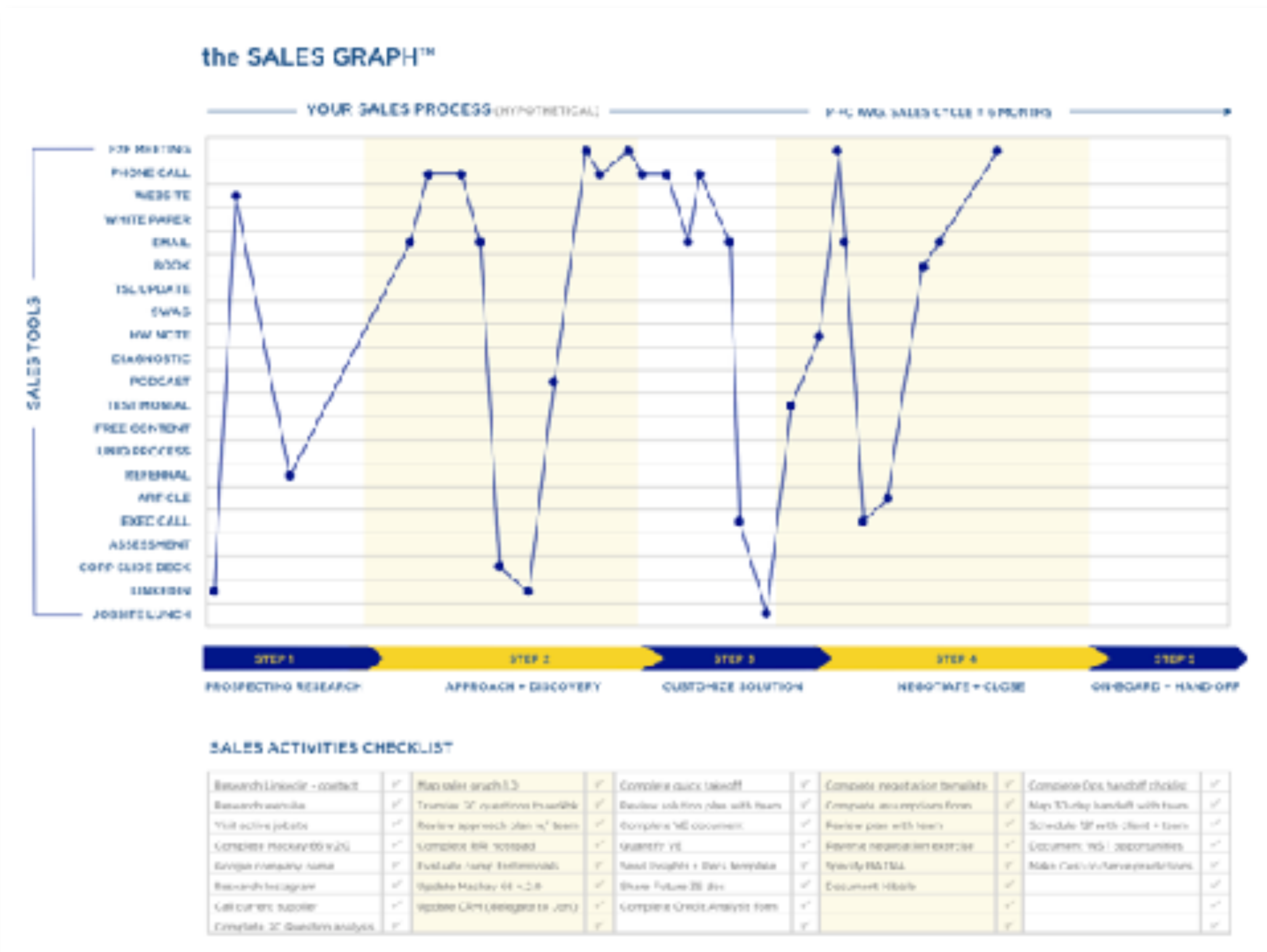
EXAMPLES OF SALES TOOLS	
YOUR WEBSITE	JOBSITE LUNCH
WHITE PAPER	BUSINESS REFERRAL
TED TALK® VIDEO	SKYBOX TICKETS
RELEVANT BOOK	LEADERSHIP ARTICLE
GREAT SWAG	GOLF OUTING
HAND-WRITTEN NOTE	ORG / ACTIVITY ASSESSMENT
HBR CASE STUDY	CORP SLIDE DECK
PODCAST RECOMMENDATION	LINKEDIN CONNECTION
CUSTOMER TESTIMONIAL	CALL FROM EXECUTIVE

Specific sales tools are more beneficial when deployed at different steps in the sales process, so we create a customized tool we call **The Sales Graph™**.

The Sales Graph™ combines three important aspects of sales previously discussed: sales activities, the sales process, and sales tools. Sales reps are better equipped to conceptualize their prospect's experience when they can visualize the various value-added tools they have in their toolbox.

Creating blank templates with the sales activities, sales process, and sales tools, will allow your sales reps to map out a plan of attack by connecting the dots. This plan will be a road map to attracting attention and delivering value first.

THE SALES GRAPH™ IS A VISUAL REPRESENTATION THAT COMBINES YOUR SALES PROCESS, SALES ACTIVITIES, AND SALES TOOLS IN A SINGLE VIEW. BY CONNECTING THE DOTS TO CREATE A LINE GRAPH, SALESPEOPLE CAN STRATEGICALLY MAP OUT METHODS TO DELIVER VALUE FIRST, ATTRACT ATTENTION, AND EARN THE RIGHT TO A MEANINGFUL CONVERSATION WITH A PROSPECT.



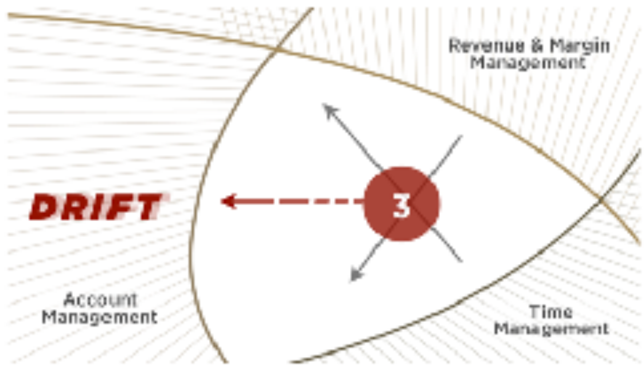
Busy Beavers Drifting . . .

As your sales team habitually drifts toward account management, know that your team is simply adapting to the environment around them. The ever-present pressures of driving revenue with a limited amount of time encourages them to drift towards account management instead of proactive prospecting.

Without a counterweight to this drift—implementing the components of the C5S Sales Model™—your sales team will continue their drift.

To be certain, it won't appear as drift. It will look like work. It will look like a team of busy beavers, moving about with urgency building a dam, one that inadvertently slows your river of future revenue and profits.

To be certain, it won't appear as drift. It will look like work. It will look like a team of busy beavers, moving about with urgency building a dam, one that inadvertently slows your river of future revenue and profits.



As a leader, this is your sales challenge: to bring awareness to this D.A.M. Problem and change habits that leverage the power of human nature to work for your team, not against it.

At best, you'll have to overcome a series of objections and stalls from your team—just like any sale. At worst, it may initially feel like you're moving a cemetery—you'll receive no assistance from the inhabitants.

Sales leadership is an effort of optimism. However, your first steps to overcoming the D.A.M. Problem will need to be rooted in realism as well. You're dealing with humans. **You know what motivates them: they want to feel safe, important, and to be heard. They want autonomy in their job. They want to reduce uncertainty in their lives.**

Emotions drive human behaviors more than logic, but the arithmetic of sales is unsentimental. Sales is a numbers game. The more prospects you have identified and are pursuing that look and sound like your best customers, the more sales you'll generate in the future.

You cannot reap that which you do not sow. The best time to start proactive daily prospecting was 9 months ago.

The next best time is today.

You have a team of busy beavers. They're out there now, working hard. They simply need a little redirection.

They need your leadership to help them avoid the drift towards account management.

Author Robert Greene noted that *"authority is the delicate art of creating the appearance of power, legitimacy, and fairness while getting people to identify with you as a leader who is in their service."*

You can do it. We're here to help you in any way we can.

Thank you for reading.

Bradley Hartmann

Footnotes and citations

1. This D.A.M. sales model has been adapted from the safety work conducted by Jens Rasmussen and his 1997 paper "Risk management in a dynamic society: A modeling problem." Safety Science 27 (2): 183–213. Rasmussen and his work was brought to my attention in an online article written by Eric Marsden. It was originally published in 2017 at riskengineering.org. "Rasmussen and practical drift: Drift towards danger and the normalization of deviance." Risk Engineering risk-engineering.org/concept/Rasmussen-practical-drift#ref-Rasmussen1997

2. For a deeper analysis on habit formation, I strongly recommend James Clear's book, *Atomic Habits*. It's an easy read with good examples and actionable frameworks. Using his Clear Habit Journal daily has been the best habit I've picked up in the last six months. If interested, you can find it here: jamesclear.com/habit-journal

3. If your sales team is your customer service team, well, I've made my point.

4. Takeoffs, I have found, are a hot button issue with sales managers and sales reps alike. Obviously takeoffs are important—no one is arguing otherwise. But this is a "Who, not how" question. Takeoffs need to be done and they need to be done well; the question is . . . *who should do them?* In working with thousands of sales reps, too many spend 50 percent or more of their time completing takeoffs—the majority of them for existing clients.

5. Sales managers often voice this concern when high-performers refuse to be held accountable and do whatever they please. And yet when companies lure away high-performers from the competition, they find the star fails to bring over anywhere near the number of accounts he promised. Both of these can't be true. Again, we can fault human nature. Loss aversion tells us we feel the pain of loss more significantly than the satisfaction of gain.

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The son of an LBM manager, Bradley Hartmann was born into the lumber business. Upon realizing his NFL dreams would never come true as a quarterback at Eastern Illinois University, Hartmann stepped aside to allow Tony Romo to fulfill his destiny.

Upon graduating, Hartmann joined Pulte Homes, where he built over 1000 homes before transitioning into an area purchasing role. After 11 years at Pulte, Hartmann launched his own training and consulting firm helping the LBM industry improve sales, productivity, and profitability.

As CEO of Bradley Hartmann & Co., Hartmann's five core service areas are sales and marketing strategy facilitation with executive teams, customized sales management coaching, sales rep coaching, sales workshops, and keynote speeches.

Hartmann has written 12 books for the industry and hosts The **Construction Leadership Podcast**, the LBM industry's most listened-to podcast. His 2x per month newsletter—**The Construction Leadership Newsletter**—is read by thousands of LBM thought leaders each month.

Inspired by the clarity and brevity of the U.S. Army Field Manuals, Hartmann recently launched **The Professional Sales Field Manual series**— brief, actionable, high-caliber online training for the craft of professional selling.

Every Professional Sales Field Manual™ Course includes:
- Brief and entertaining video modules taught
- Downloadable eBook (print book also available)
- Custom workbook to complete during video course
- Podcast training to listen to during your commute
- Sales tools and templates to implement on the job
- Certificate of Completion

Bradley graduated from the University of Illinois and later earned his MBA with Distinction. He teaches in the Construction Management departments at Texas A&M and Oklahoma State University. He lives near Dallas with his wife and two sons.

For more information and to download free resources bradleyhartmannandco.com