

4 Ways to Reenergize Your Pitch

Have you ever wondered why your performance levels lag? The magazine's resident expert knows the answer, and offers a remedy for keeping you on your game. **By Rick McCormick**

It happens to every F&I manager in every dealership. When you're fresh from a seminar or workshop, your presentation and pitch are reenergized and your customers are responsive to the new strategies you picked up. But over time, the effectiveness of the lessons learned begins to fade. Why is that, right? Well, it has to do with the law of entropy.

If you don't remember the concept from your high school physics classes, entropy, in its simplest definition, is the "inevitable and steady deterioration of a system or society." So, how do you prevent

this from happening to your F&I pitch? Well, I recently read that 86 percent of fresh knowledge learned will be lost in 90 days if it is nei-

ther reinforced nor used consistently.

So, the challenge for F&I managers is to figure out how to keep that energy level up and maintain that passion for the products you offer. So, let's review four exercises that, if followed, can help you break the law of entropy.

Step 1: How You Start Determines How You Finish

Spend the first 30 minutes of each day practicing your skills, setting a few goals for yourself and reading something inspirational. Not only will this energize you as you start the day, it will keep the things you



Finance and Insurance

can't control, such as the economy, from impacting your performance.

You also have to dedicate yourself to putting what you learned — whether from a workshop or an article — into practice every day. That means never cutting corners. It means staying with the process on a daily basis. It means training for your next customer interaction the same way professional athletes train before a sporting event, as the skills you practice regularly will find their way into your game.

Step 2: Create Your Own Momentum

Good F&I managers wait for good things to come their way. They wait for the banks to provide more flexible terms. They wait for more favorable deals and better opportunities for profit. Great F&I managers are individuals who take the limited opportunities they have and look for ways to maximize them.

So, to see an increase in overall profit and income, you must first increase the level and consistency of your training activity. So, be proactive and study the products you offer and their benefits to your customers. Doing so will not only increase your appreciation of the benefits your products offer, it will lead to a more convincing presentation.

Spending time in the service department is another great way to learn the true value of your products. There you'll see what consumers are seeing, including what repairs, both minor and major, they're paying for, and how much they cost.

Take a recent visit I made to a Toyota store. While in the service area, I overheard a customer explaining to a service rep that the keyless remote on his Toyota Camry was no longer working. It turned out the receiver inside the dash was bad. A new receiver cost \$550. After factoring in labor costs, the bill to get the remote system to work again added up to \$1,000. That's the kind of information that will improve your chances of turning a "No" into a "Yes."



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Step 3: Get Out of the Tunnel

As trainer, I've been fortunate to be able to meet some of the most talented F&I managers in the country. I know it's difficult for many of you to find time to leave the store to meet with other professionals in your field. Well, I'm here to tell you that you need to make time to get out to an industry event, like the magazine's annual conference, or join a social media group like the magazine's F&I Forum.

On the forum are some seasoned professionals who can provide great insight into how to be productive and how to produce at a high level. Collectively, there's got to be a hundred years of experience on the forum, so take a moment to read some of the

posts and become an active member.

I can't tell you how energizing it is to be able to exchange ideas with other F&I pros. These people can be goldmines of information, so take the time to step outside of your world and reach out to others in your field. Remember, never stop learning. Read everything you can find about presenting and selling intangibles.

One of the most formidable public speakers today is a gentleman named Michael Hingson. Despite being blind, he was a very successful computer sales executive with an insatiable thirst for knowledge. But that's not what makes him an inspiration. See, he was working in his office in Tower One of the World Trade Center on 9/11, and he and his loyal guide dog led dozens of people to safety just minutes before the building collapsed.

What I find motivating about Hingson's story is his refusal to stay inside the tunnel of his limitations. That's how you need to approach your career.

Step 4: If It Hurts, "S-T-R-E-T-C-H" Yourself

Wherever I go, the No. 1 question I'm



asked is, "What is everyone else doing?" Well, I'm here to tell you that the only person you need to worry about is yourself. Comparing yourself to another person's success can be deceiving and can sometimes leave you satisfied with less than your best. So, don't make that mistake.

Look, you know where you stand and what you're successful at, so work to outdo yourself. If your acceptance rate for service contracts is at 47 percent, why not make 50 percent your goal for the next three months. Your fellow F&I managers at the dealership might be at 35 percent, but remember that you're not competing against them. So, energize your production by working to beat your personal best.

My favorite story from sales guru Zig Ziglar is the one he tells about his days as a door-to-door salesman. He was making a sales call and sitting on the front porch of the house he was

visiting was an older gentleman and a whimpering dog. Ziglar asked what was wrong with the dog and the gentleman answered, "He's sitting on a nail." Ziglar responded with another question: "Why does he keep sitting on the nail?" The man's response was incredibly insightful: "Because it doesn't hurt enough for him to get up and do something about it!"

Does performing at a level that's less than your best hurt yet? Well then, break free from that trap, stretch yourself and defy the law of entropy. Don't let time drag you down. Instead, do the things you need to keep your performance levels up and watch your profits and income do the same. ■

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