



SALES MUSCLE #1

What You Believe Becomes Your Reality

“Worrying gets you nowhere. If you turn up worrying about how you’re going to perform, you’ve already lost. Train hard, turn up, run your best, and the rest will take care of itself.”

—**USAIN BOLT**

USAIN BOLT, an eight-time Olympic gold medalist, is the first to hold simultaneous world records in both the men’s 100-metre and 200-metre categories since automatic time measurements became mandatory in 1977, a feat that places him at the pinnacle of human athletic endeavor. He is a believer, both in his faith (Catholicism) and in himself. During his extraordinary career, he was widely acknowledged for his extraordinary

confidence, trusting in abilities rooted in years of training, to hone both his physiology and his finely tuned motor skills. When Bolt got ready to run a race, he had good reason to believe that he had prepared harder and longer than anyone else on that track.

Bolt had a clear strategy that he followed with great discipline in each and every race. In the 100-metre event, for instance, he divided the race into sections and pursued a distinct process for each. In the first half of the race, he began racing tall and upright out of the blocks. At 50 metres, he gave himself the opportunity to glance left and right to check his placement amongst his competitors. Most crucially, 10 metres from the finish line Bolt locked in beliefs he had earned from years of conditioning, assuring himself with an internal soliloquy aimed at his competitors: “You are not going to catch me. It doesn’t matter who you are. It doesn’t matter what you are doing.”

That internal monologue confirmed a deep, unshakeable belief in his own potential. Kindling that belief into a roaring flame is a hallmark of gold medal athletes, and it is a hallmark of gold medal salespeople as well. Such self-assurance isn’t arrogance, and it isn’t misplaced. Gold medal performers earn this belief through dedication and persistence. They realise it doesn’t happen automatically or by accident. They commit to instilling a healthy belief in their own potential and strengthening it each and every day with constant conditioning and a devotion to the ideal of learning more, practicing more, and executing at a higher level than ever before. That’s what makes them champions.

AMATEURS VS. GOLD MEDAL SALESPEOPLE

Amateur salespeople tend to think that reality is a fixed concept. Some of them feel that what happens to them is not really within their control and that they are purely or mostly victims of circumstance. These amateur salespeople say things like: “It’s a tough market out there,” or “Gatekeepers are keeping me from getting through to senior decision makers.” After events confirm their self-fulfilling prophecies, they feel they have evidence of these truths. They then make this their reality. “I just can’t get past gatekeepers!” they cry. Surprise, surprise—this is what happens from that moment forward.

Gold medal salespeople, by contrast, do not let outside circumstances deter them from anything, including prospecting. Whether gatekeepers hang up, prospects tell them never to call back, or a deal that is about to be signed falls through, they assume that reality is up to them to define. External factors do not affect the self-belief of the gold medal sales professional.

The truth is that salespeople are responsible for their attitude and behaviour—and yes, their own reality—no matter what happens. The professional salesperson knows that the control and creation of a belief system is up to them. This in turn impacts directly on the results achieved.

All the thoughts in your head, whether helpful or unhelpful, are just opinions that you have come to accept as true. The only real truth is that what you think will determine what you see and perceive as reality—and what you feel as a result. You have

The model above is known as the Belief Wheel. It is a reminder that your beliefs determine your attitude. Think again of what Usain Bolt recites in the final 10 metres of a race: “You are not going to catch me. It doesn’t matter who you are. It doesn’t matter what you are doing.”

So how does this distinguish gold medal salespeople from amateurs? To give just one example, gold medal salespeople always believe that they will hit their quarterly sales targets consistently. Because they have such a strong and powerful belief, they have an attitude of supreme confidence. This translates to how they interact with their prospects.

What’s more, gold medal salespeople are willing to follow a consistent weekly prospecting plan, composed of mixed sales activities, to ensure positive results. These sales professionals have a steadfast belief in themselves, and this belief determines the attitude and manner in which their actions are performed. The outcome is behaviour that supports the targeted results.

FAKE IT UNTIL YOU MAKE IT

Not everyone can be the world’s fastest human. No one can close every deal. However, you are responsible for believing in yourself and for fulfilling your own potential to achieve. That’s something you have in common with Usain Bolt.

The difference between being an amateur performer and a gold medal salesperson is acting like an A-Player. An A-Player accepts that it is the individual’s responsibility to get the very

most out of their abilities. Moreover, A-Players take control of their beliefs and behaviours and act to become the best version of who they can be. This is how you can achieve your goals as both a salesperson and in all aspects of your life. But here's the problem: You can't expect to achieve important goals unless you understand what you already believe—and why.

YOUR FIRST FIVE YEARS

Your core beliefs were formed during the first five years of your life, and they generally come from your primary caregivers. (Of course, they also grow to include other factors such as culture, country, religion, and all other life experiences that you encounter.)

You were like a sponge during those first five years, and the beliefs that you imbibed then became hard-coded. Even now, you view your reality through these beliefs. These beliefs became entrenched in your psyche and determine your attitude and drive as an adult. Moreover, they influence what you are willing to do—and what you are not willing to do.

Your reality, your experiences of life (including your sales results), are no more than a reflection of your beliefs—and those beliefs are not even entirely yours. They were what you heard and absorbed in the first five years of your life.

Most people have been taught lessons as children that turned out to not benefit them as adults, including salespeople. When you were very young, were you told, “Go speak to as

many strangers as possible”? No, of course not. You were told, “Don’t speak to strangers.” How does that make you feel about, say, phone prospecting?

You may also have been told, “Money doesn’t grow on trees.” How does that make you feel about talking to prospects about how much they need to pay you to benefit from working with you? How likely are you to want to offer a discount? Money is hard to come by, after all.

These are just two examples of what you heard growing up. Your belief systems could be affecting your sales performance now as an adult.

TWO KINDS OF BELIEFS

Empowering beliefs are positive and support your actions. If you believe that your company has a great product and that your marketplace is in dire need of your services, as a salesperson you are likely to want to pick up the phone and prospect immediately and with great vigor. You won’t let the occasional grouchy gatekeeper affect your confidence. This is because you believe that your prospects are going to be grateful and happy as a result of your persistence when they do buy from you.

Disempowering beliefs, in contrast, cultivate a negative attitude and make you feel more anxious about taking action. A common fear for many salespeople, for example, is the worry, “I won’t hit my sales numbers this month.” When this is the case, if a prospect says, “I’m not interested,” the amateur salesperson’s

response is fear. This is because the amateur salesperson translates this response into thinking that very few people will buy the product or that the goods or services being sold are not worth buying.

The outcome and resulting reality reinforces these fears. It's safe to say that if salespeople believe these disempowering ideas wholeheartedly, it is unlikely that they will hit their monthly numbers. The system explained in this book defines such disempowering beliefs as "head trash." Head trash includes all limiting thoughts that go round and round in your head.

So, let's go back to the Belief Wheel. When it comes to beliefs, you can have an outlook of limitations or an outlook of possibilities. It's all about what you choose. Professional salespeople, much like Usain Bolt, choose an outlook of possibilities. They then implement empowering beliefs to reflect and strengthen this choice.

If you are willing to challenge and change your disempowering beliefs, then there will be a corresponding change in your results.

CLARA'S STORY

When I first met Clara, she was struggling as a marketing consultant. She worked very long hours and believed that it was a tough market out there. She charged a daily rate of £500 (US\$645) and was constantly being beaten up on rates. I told her that her pricing was too low. Moreover, she was attracting

penny-pinching clients who did not value her. She found this hard to swallow. When I then recommended that she increase her daily rate to £1,500, she nearly fell over.

Clara held the disempowering belief that she could not charge any more than £500 per day for her services. Not only did she believe that people not pay her that fee and selling at that level would be difficult, but also she believed her services were not worth more than £500 and that she did not deserve to earn any more than that. These beliefs led her to a mental state of constant stress and depression, and they supported a behaviour pattern I would describe as “desperate.” Basically, she was under such financial and emotional stress that she would take any meeting, with anyone, at any time—even with someone who was manifestly unqualified to be a prospect.

I slowly helped Clara to discover new empowering beliefs that helped her change both her business and her life. Two of her new beliefs were: “The market does not dictate what I charge for my services,” and “I provide incredible value for the services that I deliver, and I charge accordingly.”

It did not happen overnight, but slowly and surely Clara was willing to challenge her old head trash. Now, three years later, her daily rate is over £3,000 per day—and she has a very impressive new client base. Her clients are happy to pay her what she deserves.

GOOD NEWS AND BAD NEWS

The good news is that your disempowering beliefs can be changed. The bad news is that it takes effort and a determined willingness to move through your comfort zones.

First, identify your disempowering beliefs. When you are undertaking sales activities, be aware of your negative thoughts throughout the day and write them down—not to reinforce them, but to help you notice how absurd they are. Next, visualise yourself achieving your sales goals for the month, happily doing all you need to do to achieve them. Your head trash will become more noticeable and will eventually recede.

You know you need to make some cold calls. The next thought that probably comes to mind is, “People don’t want to hear from me,” or “The people I speak to are going to be rude and will tell me to go away.” If you allow a dominant negative thought to stay with you, you are likely to resist the action of making cold calls. This is pure head trash.

It is important to realise that your beliefs are just thoughts in your head and can’t be proved to be true or untrue—until you have experienced them to be so in life. However, as discussed earlier, what you believe will happen tends to happen. When you have identified an example of sales head trash, such as, “I am fearful of people telling me to get lost,” take control and create a new empowering belief that is 180 degrees different from your head-trash belief.

For the head trash above, the new empowering belief could

be: “The service that I have to offer is of great value, but it is OK for some people to tell me that they are not interested.” Or, “My product is amazing—and it’s their lucky day to get a call from me!”

EXERCISE: TAKING OUT YOUR HEAD TRASH

Head trash is nothing more than holding an outlook of limiting thoughts and disempowering beliefs. To overcome this, write down the empowering belief that is the opposite of your head trash.

When I do this exercise with salespeople in my Sandler sales gym, the result usually looks something like the following.

Your Head Trash	Your Empowering Beliefs
“I’m not be good enough.”	“I am more than good enough.”
“I might fail.”	“Every time I fail I am one step closer to success.”
Company Head Trash	Company Empowering Beliefs
“Our company is too small.”	“Clients love the personal service our small company provides.”
Marketplace Head Trash	Marketplace Empowering Beliefs
“There are not enough good prospects.”	“There is an endless supply of prospects.”
“Potential clients mess me around.”	“I only work with clients I like and respect.”

Do the exercise above before you move on to the next chapter. Once you do, you will have started working out your first sales muscle. Developing this muscle is a core behaviour of gold medal salespeople.

REFLECTION

What you believe becomes your reality. Actions are required to achieve results, but all your actions are driven by attitude. Amateur salespeople do not understand the science of how to build a powerful attitude, and thus both their attitude and actions are generally erratic and inconsistent. In contrast, professional salespeople recognise that they need a winning attitude, and this can be achieved by working on their belief system.