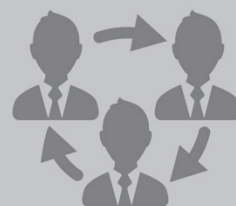


# THE SEVEN DEADLY SALES SINS:

Why Salespeople Get Perceived as Nothing More than Vendors & Commodity Sellers

the new sales coach

*Mike Weinberg*  
sales management.  
new sales. **SIMPLIFIED.**



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# INTRODUCTION

My favorite thing in business is helping companies and salespeople acquire more new customers.

So I spend a ton of time with sales teams observing and studying the things that get in the way – the reasons that keep them from succeeding developing new business and acquiring new clients. As you know from the titles of my books and tone of my blog posts, I like to keep things simple and call it like I see it. While there are a couple dozen common reasons individual salespeople and sales teams underperform (see Chapter 2 in [New Sales. Simplified.](#) and all of Part One in [Sales Management. Simplified.](#)), there are two big, broad buckets of reasons salespeople struggle to pick up new business. The first is as glaring as it gets: We don't prospect enough. We don't work the top of the funnel. We live in reactive mode instead of proactively pursuing target prospects. We babysit existing customers. We forget our primary job and play good corporate citizen instead of remaining focused on what should be our number one priority. As simply as I can articulate it, salespeople don't generate enough new business because they spend very little time focused on developing new business. Rocket science, I know.

The second broad category of reasons, and **the focus of this ebook, is that salespeople diminish how they're perceived by prospects and are therefore much less effective. Very often they come across as nothing more than a vendor, pitchman, or supplier who ends up getting commoditized.** Sure, they want to be seen as value-creators, consultants, trusted advisors, and professional problem-solvers, but their own actions and attitudes relegate them to vendor/commodity-seller status in the buyer's eyes.

# INTRODUCTION

This book outlines what I've come to call **The Seven Deadly Sales Sins that could be derailing your sales effort and preventing potential clients from viewing you as the consultant and value creator you so badly want to be.** My challenge to you is to put your ego aside and put down your defense shield. Let me hold up this mirror so you can take a look and see if any of these common deadly sales sins could be relegating you or your sales team to nothing more than vendor status in the eyes of your prospects.

## THE SEVEN DEADLY SALES SINS

1. Always Waiting



2. Lead with Product



3. Self-Focused



4. Premature



5. Sameness



6. Low Aim



7. Order-Taker



# 1. LIVING IN REACTIVE MODE/WAITING AND ARRIVING LATE TO THE PARTY

This image represents an awful, but very common posture for a salesperson. What are salespeople waiting for? The phone to ring. The new website to launch. The latest product release. An existing customer to raise their hand. A lead. This is a disaster and the opposite of top performers in new business development who are out in front of the curve – asking for forgiveness not asking for permission.



So what happens when you live in reactive mode? You wait. And when you wait, you're late. When you're late to the party, it is infinitely harder to bring value or be perceived as a consultant. You end up last to the party. The prospect has already gone shopping without you. They've formed their buying criteria, or worse, they're following the lead of your more proactive competitor. You're now forced to play their already in-progress game. That's not only not fun, it dooms you to vendor status. When you're last to the opportunity it's very hard to stand out and get attention unless your price is much lower. And that's not a game we want to play.

## 2. LEADING WITH YOUR PRODUCT, OFFERING, OR SOLUTION

Not only do we arrive late, but when we get there, what do we do to cement our status as just a vendor or pitchman? We lead with our offering and put our solution front and center – making it the focus of the sales conversation.

Leading with our product/solution instead of the customer's issues and desired outcomes makes a loud, clear statement to customers that we care more about what we sell than their issues/business/needs/desires. This is a surefire way to get commoditized. When we make the product/solution the star of our sales show we beg the customer to take our feature set and our price and put it on a spreadsheet to compare to everyone else's features and price.



### 3. SELF-FOCUSED STORY

I love me some me!

What do salespeople talk about? What's the first thing that comes out of their mouths on the phone or when face to face? What is often the very first line in an email, presentation or proposal?

*"We do this. We do that. We do this other thing. We're the biggest. We're the best. We're family held. We've been in business 89 years."*

So what? Who cares?



Newsflash: no one cares how great you think your company or your solution is. They want to know what's in it for them. What you do is not important; it's what you achieve for your customers. Please stop talking about what you do and start leading with the issues you address for customers: *Their* pains you help remove....The problems you help solve.... The opportunities you help them capture. And maybe most important, the new and better outcomes/results you help them achieve!

One last tip on this point: How about deleting the presentation slides with organization charts and pictures of your buildings? I'm taking away the sales card of the next person who shows a picture of their building to a prospect. Unless you work for NASA, an architecture firm or a resort, trust me, you are not helping your cause showing pictures of your company facilities.



## 4. PREMATURE PRESENTATIONS

We confuse presenting with selling.

Presenting is not a synonym for selling it's a small part. We present too much and too soon – often way too soon. Just because a prospect asks us for a demo or to come in and present a capabilities overview, that doesn't mean it's the right time to do it!

How do we expect them to perceive us as a true consultant and someone who can bring value if we come in and present a solution before we really understand their situation and what is going on in their world?



When we present too soon it's just like what these images communicate. We are going "all in" and making a wild bet or wild-ass guess without really having a clue. Does your doctor hand you a prescription before examining you and trying to discover what you truly need? Along the same lines, why would a potential client ever see us as a trusted advisor earning a seat at their table when we show up in broadcast mode?

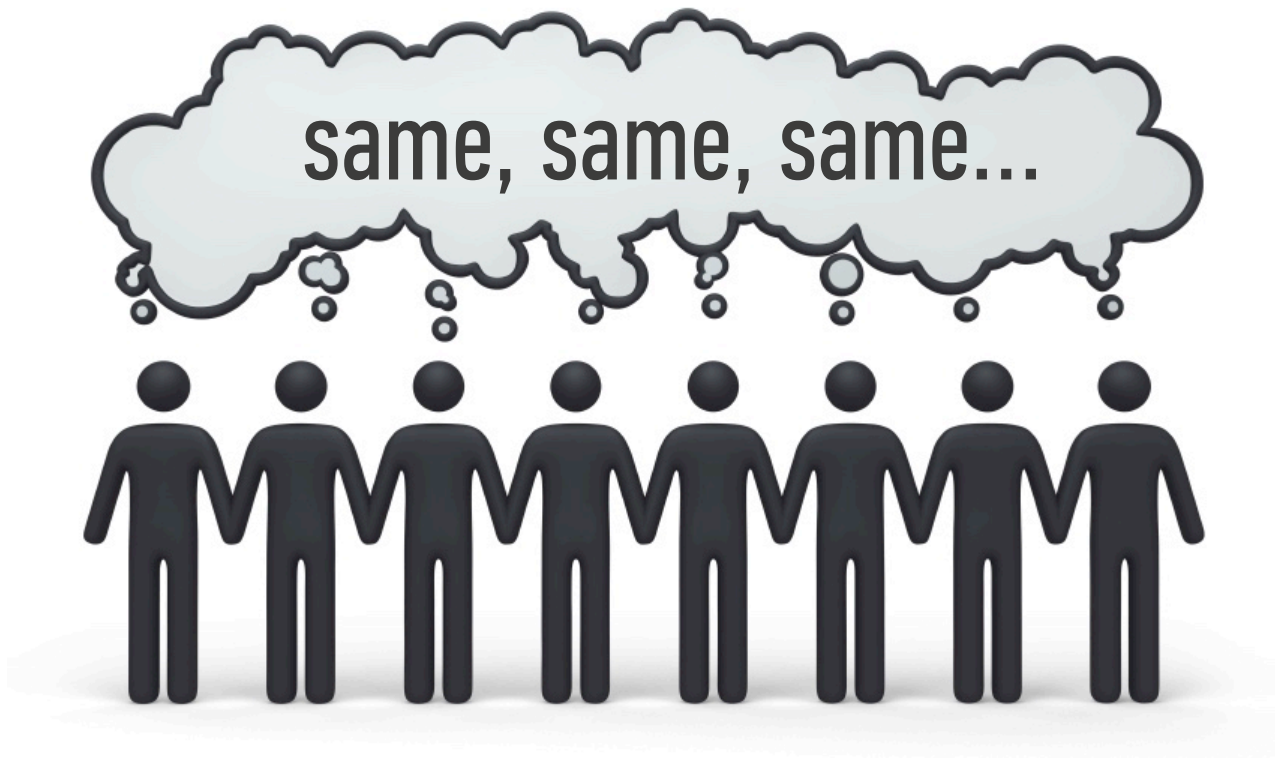


## 5. SAME. SAME. SAME

Why is it when I listen to salespeople on the phone, or read their emails, or watch them on sales calls, doing online demos and big boardroom presentations - they all look the same? Same. Same. Same.

Do you think that maybe, just maybe, you get lumped in with everyone else competing for the business because you look just like everyone else?

Is it in the realm of possibility that you get commoditized because there is truly no differentiation in how you sell? Think about it. It bewilders me how executives or reps will spend hours nuancing the wording of a few bullet points on their slides but fail to see that the entirety of their approach and the format of their presentation is a carbon copy of what their competitors are doing.



## 6. AIMING TOO LOW IN CUSTOMER ORGANIZATION

How about this for a radical thought: We get commoditized because we've become comfortable being treated as nothing more than a vendor.

In fact, we like it so much, we keep pursuing the low-level contacts at our prospects. Time after time we go after purchasing or first-line managers because we are comfortable at that level. It feels safe and it's familiar.

Many sellers have this artificial fear of aiming higher. They're scared to pursue senior executives. Let me share a dirty little secret of those of us who call on senior management: You know what you normally find in the executive suite? Nicer people. Smarter people. People who are looking for value and help solving big business issues! It's often the complete opposite of dealing with lower-level folks who are more concerned with politics, protecting their jobs, existing supplier relationships, or having more work put on their desk.

If you want to elevate how you're perceived by customers, elevate who you're targeting. But be darn sure that you've sharpened your "Sales Story" because executives don't give a rip about your offerings, your price or what your buildings look like.

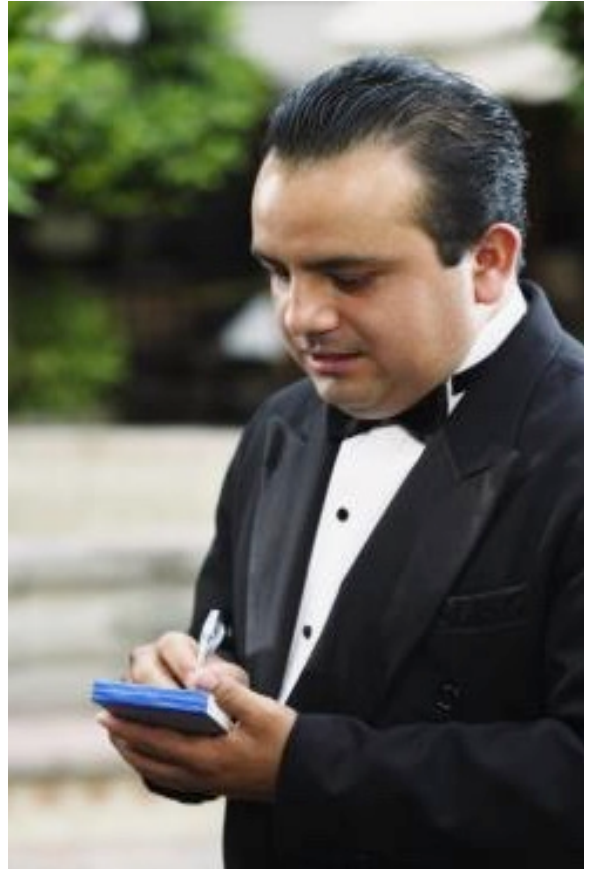


(See Chapter 8 in [New Sales. Simplified](#) for everything you need to craft a compelling, relevant, succinct, differentiating sales story that will build credibility and position you as an expert, problem-solver, consultant and value-creator.)

## 7. ORDER-TAKER / YES MAN

There are a lot of highly relational and service-oriented salespeople who think they can win deals by scoring obedience and responsiveness points.

When the customer or prospect says “jump,” their immediate response is “how high?” They (mistakenly) believe that if they’re the most agreeable, the fastest, the most compliant to the customer’s every request -- that puts them in a more favorable position. But in today’s challenging business environment, I would argue that can have the reverse affect. Assuming the posture of an order-taker and doing exactly what the customer instructs, diminishes your status instead of enhancing it.



How are you bringing value to the equation when you are more concerned with pleasing the customer than delivering the optimal solution? If you just salute and act like a yes man, how are you differentiating yourself or earning a spot as consultant to the buyer? The truth is that you are not. Unless you own your sales process and define your personal rules of engagement, it’s very difficult to upgrade how customers perceive you.

# MIKE WEINBERG | THE NEW SALES COACH

Mike Weinberg is a consultant, sales coach, speaker and author on a mission to simplify sales. His specialties are New Business Development and Sales Management, and his passion is helping companies and individuals acquire new clients. Prior to launching his own firm, Mike had been the top-producing salesperson in three organizations.

Forbes, OpenView and several other publications have named Mike a Top Sales Influencer.



He is also the author of two Amazon #1 Bestsellers. His first book, *New Sales. Simplified. – The Essential Handbook for Prospecting and New Business Development*, spent a full year as the Top-Rated book in its category. And his latest book, *Sales Management. Simplified.* is being called “arguably the greatest book ever written on sales management, and an unequalled blueprint for leading salespeople and building high-performance sales teams.”

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