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THINK LIKE AN ENTREPRENEUR

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Every company, small or large, needs increasing sales to stay in business. Knowing how to sell things to potential customers is of utmost importance whether you are a business owner or the salesperson.

In many ways, being a salesperson is like being an entrepreneur, and interestingly, many great entrepreneurs have gotten their start in sales. The two are connected. There is nothing more critical to a successful business than sales. Yes, individuals such as Ray Kroc of McDonald's, Howard Shultz of Starbucks, and Mark Cuban, Owner of the Dallas Mavericks, all began their careers in sales.

Speaking of Mark Cuban, if you have ever watched the television show Shark Tank, you may have noticed one of the first questions a Shark such as Mark, asks an entrepreneur that is seeking an investment of capital for their business. "What are your current sales figures?" When they already indicate that there are substantial sales, the Sharks are interested. When the entrepreneur does not have sales, the Sharks are not interested.

Logically, knowing how to sell things is the most significant contribution towards a successful business. When a company has increased sales, other minor mistakes that happen along the way can be resolved. However, errors made in the initial stages of any business are magnified when there are not

enough sales, and the outcome in most cases is that the business will fail.

Now, if you are selling a product or service for an already successful company, you can gain significant experience. You can increase your knowledge of the value chain - the processes and activities by which your company adds value to its product, including the production, marketing, and provisions for after-sales service if necessary. It is critical to understand each step in the value chain because this will help you increase your industry expertise. You should learn what it takes to successfully interact with the operations team and understand the delivery process of the product or service. Most importantly, you should gain an understanding of the financial aspects of the business -not only knowing what it costs your company to produce and deliver the product, but also the expense involved to acquire new customers. Also, if you have the unique opportunity to launch a new product line, this experience will provide an understanding of the cycle of customer acceptance of new products.

The important thing to remember is that you should view the company you work for as if you own the company. You are a business within the business. You are in the "sales-generating" business.

An excellent example of a highly entrepreneurial salesperson is Joseph Samuel Girardi, better

known as Joe Girard, (born November 1, 1928, in Detroit, Michigan). Girard sold 13,001 cars at a Chevrolet dealership between 1963 and 1978 and was recognized by the Guinness Book of World Records as the seller of the most vehicles in a year (1,425 in 1973) Joe was referred to as "a dealership within a dealership." He earned more in commissions than most other car dealers made in profits. He never owned the car dealership where he worked. However, he acted as if he did.

Just like Joe, the best salespeople in the world are highly entrepreneurial and are focused on generating revenue for themselves and their employers. They realize that this is a harmonious relationship that exists. When they win, their employer wins.

It may sound a bit out of the ordinary to say that you should work like you own the business, but that mental attitude will take you a long way toward a successful sales career. Keep in mind that business owners assume many risks and have headaches that the salesperson doesn't have - financial, employee, accounting, budgeting, and other planning issues.

Are you the next Kroc, Shultz or Cuban? Who knows? Think like an entrepreneur. It is a sure way to improve your performance, and it provides an innovative approach to your current role.