

## More Stupid Human Tricks – The Corporate Version

Those humans are fighting nature again. That urge to cut back when things get tough is in itself – tough. So the economy is slowing and orders aren't forthcoming, previously booked business is being cancelled, and salespeople are quickly learning that selling is more than showing up and taking orders. But what do our human friends upstairs in the corner offices do? Cut Back. Then cut back some more.

OK. So it's practical to cut costs where we can, not take on additional overhead, and keep an eye on the budget. One could even call it prudent. But why are people cutting back on their sales forces? It's a stupid human trick of the dumbest kind, one that makes no sense – financially, logistically or practically. That request for 10 more computers won't bring in any more business and neither will the request to upgrade office furniture. We can probably get another year out of the fleet and we don't really need to have the national sales meeting in Hong Kong. But if the average salesperson brings in a factor of 10 to 15 times their compensation in sales, why would we want FEWER of them? I understand that their base is (technically) an expense. But it's the only expense, other than Marketing, that brings revenue IN.

So the CFO, Controller and your CPA will argue that we should cut anywhere we can. Fine, but not the sales force. In this economy, we must put MORE salespeople to work, not less. We must provide MORE training, don't cancel it. Initiate more accountability, not less.

Come, all ye humans. Don't screw this message up. If sales are flat, or worse, down from your goals and projections, INCREASE the sales effort and do not tighten the belt in the sales department. Have your sales organisation evaluated, find out who has the ability to become more effective and give them the training they'll need to reach their fullest potential.

The window of opportunity is only open for a short period of time. If you wait too long or miss it altogether, by the time you figure out that you need to do something drastic to bring the business in it will be too late to compensate for what was lost. Be proactive, take action now, and you won't have to be one of the companies that are adversely affected by the "blue economy."

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