

## College of Business Book Review by Kristin Russell

Title: The Psychology of Sales Success

Author: Gerhard Gschwandtner

Publisher: McGraw-Hill

Copyright: 2007

Length: 256 pages

Price: \$24.95

Reading time: 5 hours

Reading rating: 9 (1 = very difficult; 10 = very easy)

Overall rating: 2 (1 = average; 4 = outstanding)

Gerhard Gschwandtner's "The Psychology of Sales Success" promises to help salespeople learn to think like their customers in order to close every sale. In writing the book, Gschwandtner interviewed leading psychologists, psychiatrists, business school professors, authors and various "super achievers," or individuals who have been incredibly successful in their chosen fields. This provided a diverse foundation of knowledge on which to base his book.

"The Psychology of Sales Success" is divided into three succinct sections – Understanding Success, Understanding Your Customers and Understanding Yourself. Each chapter also has a set of clear objectives followed by a short synopsis. The chapters are summed up with steps to put the reader's newfound knowledge into action. Therefore, the book is incredibly easy to read and gives simple steps that salespeople may begin to use in the field immediately.

The first section of the book contains five chapters detailing various aspects of success. Gschwandtner focuses on attitude, concentration, confidence, and creativity. He also includes quizzes and statistics that are especially helpful for salespeople in assessing their attitude in comparison to "super achievers."

Section two instructs salespeople how to better understand their customers. Gschwandtner takes the approach of providing practical steps to follow versus presenting psychological theory. He details the various customer personality types and provides the salesperson guidance, such as, how to tell when these customer types are being dishonest and how to deal with their dishonesty. The author also offers advice of how to skillfully deal with angry customers, thrive with confrontational clients and get procrastinators to the closing table. Finally, Gschwandtner provides the most useful information of the book, how a salesperson can become a better listener.

The final section strives to help salespeople better understand themselves. Like the previous section, the third section presents little psychological theory in favor of focusing on practical advice. Gschwandtner begins by focusing on issues that plague salespeople and diminish their confidence, such as, anxiety, disappointment, helplessness and stress. He also offers tips as to overcoming burnout and procrastination.

The book is well-written and holds the reader's attention with statistics and personal stories. Salespeople may also benefit from the author's practical steps to action. However, with 22 chapters, each devoted to a separate topic, the information presented in each chapter is limited. This is not a weakness provided a potential reader understands this prior to purchasing the book.

Therefore, the novice salesperson has the most to gain from "The Psychology of Sales Success." Inexperienced salespeople will find invaluable knowledge and step-by-step advice to improve his/her closing ratio.

Experienced salespeople, on the other hand, are unlikely to find any new and useful information in this book if they begin reading the book with the expectation that it holds the magic formula to closing every sale, as the cover suggests. However, if experienced salespeople read this book with the expectation that it will help them review the basics, as any professional will find helpful at various points in their career, they will find the book to be an instructive source.

In conclusion, "The Psychology of Sales Success" offers a crash course of how salespeople may increase their closing ratio. The book is much lighter on psychological theory than one might expect from the title. However, it does offer simple steps that salespeople may immediately incorporate in the field. Upon reading "The Psychology of Sales Success," salespeople should better understand themselves, their clients and the attitude adjustments they must make if they wish to be successful.

Kristin Russell is a professor of marketing in the College of Business at Western Carolina University. For previously reviewed books, visit us at our website at [www.wcu.edu/cob](http://www.wcu.edu/cob).