

Sales Ability Is Not Fixed

Success in selling, like any other profession, is the result of competent training and relentless practice. There are no natural born sellers. Selling is not an innate skill, but one that must be constantly nurtured. This has been proven though recent discoveries in the field of neuroscience, which have revealed that the human brain is not hardwired, but is constantly changing. The reason is because of the over 100 billion neurons contained within the brain.¹ These neurons are cells that process and store information and as a result impact all human behavior.² Each neuron has thousands of synapses which allow it to connect to other neurons.

Synaptic connections between neurons actually create new neural pathways throughout the brain. It is these connections that allow the human brain to learn.^{3,4} Neuroscientist James Zell verifies “that every fact we know, every idea we understand, and every action we take has the form of a network of neurons in our brain.”⁵ It is also important to realize that these synaptic connections are not fixed, but continually shift depending upon what the brain is encountering and focused upon.^{6,7} When neural connections in the brain are used repeatedly they become stronger.⁸

For instance, Betty Edwards is an art expert who teaches ordinary people how to draw impressive self-portraits. She accomplishes this feat not in years, months or even weeks. She does this within a mere five days. In her book, *The New Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain*, Edwards writes that once a person understands the technical components of drawing he or she will progress rapidly with focused practice.⁹ Edwards further emphasizes that most people do not lack drawing skills, but rather seeing skills. She maintains that once she shows her students how to perceive things such as, edges, spaces, lighting, shadows and relationships between objects, their ability to draw quickly improves.

Likewise, when sales people go through productive sales training they are literally rewiring their brains as new networks of neurons are formed and current networks associated with a behavior are strengthened. Also, because the brain is constantly changing, sales ability is also malleable. This is why the capacity to sell should be thought of as a muscle that must be continually developed.

In sales, failure is not an option. The health of a business is directly related to the effectiveness of its sales people. This is why sales training matters. It prepares sales people for success. The new reality is that in the modern, ultracompetitive marketplace, having well-trained sales people is no longer an option; it has become a survival skill. Therefore, it is a business imperative.

About the Author

David Hoffeld is CEO of the Hoffeld Group, a research based sales training, coaching and consulting firm that is the leader in the integration of proven science and sales. The Hoffeld Group takes the repeatable and predictable principles, which science has proven to create and enable influence, out of the laboratory and academic journals and apply them to selling. For a deeper look at the Hoffeld Group's groundbreaking research and innovative sales strategies visit HoffeldGroup.com.

Notes

1. F. Bloom, C. Nelson and A. Lazerson. *Brain, Mind and Behavior*, 3rd ed. (London: Worth, 2001).
2. I. Squire and E. Kandel. *Memory from Mind to Molecules*. (New York: Scientific American Library, 2000).
3. Richard Davidson, Daren Jackson and Ned Kalin. *Psychological Bulletin*, 126, no. 6. (2000). p. 890 – 909.
4. Pierce J. Howard. *The Owner's Manual For The Brain*. (Austin, Texas: Bard Press, 2006). p. 495.
5. J.E. Zull. *The Art of Changing the Brain: Enriching the Practice of Teaching by Exploring the Biology of Learning*. (Sterling, VA: Stylus, 2002). p. 99.
6. Richard Davidson, Daren Jackson and Ned Kalin. *Psychological Bulletin*, 126, no. 6, 2000. p. 890 – 909.
7. Pierce J. Howard, *The Owner's Manual For The Brain*. (Austin, Texas: Bard Press, 2006). p. 495.
8. Gerald Edelman. *Neural Darwinism: The Theory of Neuronal Groups Selection*. (New York: Basic Books, 1987). p. 58.
9. Betty Edwards. *The New Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain*. (New York: Putnam Books, 1999).
10. Ibid. p. 16 – 18.