

# SUCCESSFUL SELLING IN A

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## STAYING AFLOAT IN THE RECESSION

No one envies salespeople these days.

After all, trying to sell anything in this recession – when everyone is cutting back – is a huge challenge to say the very least.

Deon Haynes, market manager for Burbank CA-based Workway, knows this well.

“They have to plant seeds right now rather than necessarily achieving results.”

*How to Become a Rainmaker*, by Jeffrey J. Fox. “It’s like a little handbook,” she says. “It’s great. It’s not a lot of fluffy, philosophical stuff. It’s: Here’s how to become a top producer. It’s wonderful. It’s one of the best little sales books out there. It’s about getting to know your customer’s business.” Paramount Staffing’s Schubert says he encourages his salespeople to read books by Jeff Gitmore. “He’s my hero. He’s a great author.”

### One-on-One Coaching

Manpower – which has always provided one-on-one coaching for its salespeople – is doing more of it in the recession and that’s been beneficial for both the client and the salesperson, says Minatel. The coaching covers Manpower’s overall financial model, how things are priced, and the methodology the company uses, so salespeople are able to articulate to a client why the price is what it is, according to Minatel.

### Sales Courses Let Salespeople Polish Their Skills, Learn New Ones

Akraya, a Sunnyvale CA-based IT staffing firm, this spring began enrolling its salespeople in sales-related courses through StaffingU, according to Milissa Ales-Barnicoat, VP of sales. “In a tough time, we have invested in our team,” she explains. “We have recognized this may not be a banner year. We’re investing in something to say we’re in it for the long haul, and we’re investing in you. You’re going to make it through it. It’s okay.”

Salespeople are expected to take 12 required courses before the end of the year. They take the 50 minute-classes in Akraya’s office on Tuesdays. If there are other StaffingU courses they are interested in, they can take those, too.

“They’re doing something in a really tough environment that they feel is going to give them a competitive edge,” says Ales-Barnicoat. “We felt

like this was kind of a back-to-basics kind of year. It was time for real back-to-basics training.” One-on-one meetings are held with salespeople to discuss what they’ve learned from the courses. There are many sales training experts and courses available to staffing firms, both coaches who will make site visits and programs via e-learning.

### Celebrating Success

Manpower has always celebrated success but is doing it more in the recession, even if it’s something small, says Minatel. “We want to keep our salespeople motivated,” she says.

Minatel, who has been in the staffing industry more than 23 years and with Manpower for more than 13 years, says the current recession is one of the toughest she’s seen. “It’s so different from anything else we’ve seen. When you have tough times, what comes out of that is opportunity. It has given us a tremendous amount of opportunity.”

### Setting Activity-Based Goals Rather Than Results-Based Goals

QPS Companies – which normally gives its salespeople results-based goals – for the first time began giving them activity-based goals this year, says Mark Immekus, executive VP/chief sales officer. “We refer to it as the Johnny Appleseed period. They have to plant seeds right now rather than necessarily achieving results,” he says.

This summer, to alleviate and prevent burnout, QPS implemented a program in which salespeople could take Friday off if they had met 80% of the activity metrics by Thursday, Immekus explains. They could go shopping, fishing, play golf – whatever they wanted to do – and it wasn’t held against them. “We want them to get a little reprieve so that they’re sharp and ready to go (when the economy turns around),” Immekus says.