

Barking Up a Dead Horse

**Avoiding the Wasted Time and Effort
in Business-to-Business Sales**

Advance Preview

Tom Batchelder



INTRODUCTION

I had an old boss whose brain worked so fast he could mix and mangle a metaphor or catchphrase like nobody I had ever heard. When we were working on a title for the book, I threw out **Barking Up a Dead Horse**, half jokingly, in his honor and it stuck. This mixed metaphor has been eliciting immediate reactions from people from day one – from dazed confusion to spontaneous laughter. The more I thought about it, *Barking Up a Dead Horse* seemed like the perfect analogy to what I see happening for many business professionals, especially those in any sales or business development role. They are spending lots of time *Barking Up Wrong Trees* and equal amounts of energy *Beating Dead Horses*. I've seen staggering amounts of time and energy wasted because of unconscious thinking, habitual behaviors, ineffective written and spoken language, and inconsistent processes void of clear intent or straight forward next steps.

Professionals today spend as many as two thousand hours working over the course of a year. Of those two thousand hours, research, straw polling, and my own personal experience tell me that most professionals are at their best, maximizing their strengths, optimally effective, laser focused, inspired, and producing positive results no more than 20 percent of the time. That leaves upwards of 1,600 hours, 80 percent of their time, or 200 work days annually, operating at sub par levels of effectiveness and efficiency. It isn't that people are just slacking off; in fact it's quite the contrary. The professionals I know are flying, driving, on conference calls,

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in client meetings, negotiating deals, answering requests for proposals, assembling flashy PowerPoints, gaming out a strategy for the next big deal, filling out forms, answering hundreds of emails, making phone calls, and thinking about work most of their waking hours.

Working harder is not the problem. Having access to more information is not the issue. Every day we get inundated with information, much of which we never asked for and isn't in our own best interest to consider. Let's face it; the majority of professionals today are addicted to activity. At the same time, they are often unclear about what they are doing and why they are doing it. Despite all of their efforts, their new business approach is unfocused and often leads to getting lied to. In their minds, they are underestimating their own true value to others. In their written and spoken words they are not effectively communicating what differentiates them from the competition. This in turn makes it harder for new clients to buy even if they do have a genuine need. Business professionals today are too often unclear and don't have the highest intent entering into important meetings, presentations, and negotiations. They are lacking a consistent, disciplined client engagement process that attracts the right kinds of clients and helps alert them of when to walk away from bad business. More often, they are not really listening and they are missing the tangible clues and subtle psychological cues that can provide an extra edge in a negotiation. Many are playing a role, putting on a mask, and not really being their true selves. Much of this is driven by the fear of losing a client or a new "big" deal. This fear keeps them from asking important qualifying questions and having the right mindset to ensure they find and close the right kinds of new business opportunities.

I know this sounds kind of grim. The good news is that there is hope. There are successful, disciplined, well-intended

business professionals out there who are having success. They are doing it with more effective, sustainable, forward-thinking approaches to negotiation, new client engagement, and business and personal growth. And although change is hard, we all have the capacity to “rewire” our brains, adopt new techniques and interrupt tired, ineffective approaches to our business results and life success.

I like to visit bookstores and wander the aisles, looking for inspiration and new thinking. With my multiple interests in business, sales, leadership, communication, and psychology, there is plenty to choose from. I have found a number of unique works that inspired new thinking while also providing useful information relevant to me and my world. And yet among the few books that do speak to me I still find myself looking for something more. Mostly I find more of the same dense, corporate, process-oriented rhetoric or cute, warm and fuzzy metaphors designed to dramatically change my life in one sitting. They are all well-meaning, useful, and many are written by smart, well-credentialed experts. That being said, I have long sensed there is still a gap in the conversation.

What I find, especially in the sales section, is that there isn't much that speaks to the heart of how and why so many people who are responsible for developing new business get sapped of energy, focus, and inspiration over time. Aside from having a “system” for how to get from point A to point B, most don't talk honestly about the struggles we have in our professional lives, and the fear we have of change and not getting what we want. There is little discussion about the power that authentic confidence, a disciplined mindset, and consistent high intent can have on the bottom line of profit and productivity. Seldom are words like fear, courage, ego, and personal growth mixed together for a professional audience looking for more effective ways to grow their business. There are many books

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full of information, anecdotes, and inspiring stories, but do they really stimulate new thinking?

It is time for a new wave of creative, forward-thinking, thoughtful leaders in sales, business communication, and life achievement that are NOT promising the silver bullet. Coaches, consultants, authors, and speakers that are moving beyond the small minded pep rally, the self-serving academic gathering, and the religious fervor stirred by following one mega-famous talking head offering “the path to success, riches, and happiness.” I have found there is a hunger for new leaders that are serving a professional audience and delivering practical solutions blended with creativity and connecting to a deeper level of substance and, dare I say, soul. This movement is small, but happening, driven by a select group of progressive leaders as well as thoughtful consultants, coaches, speakers, and authors who provide unique and valuable outside perspectives.

I have had the pleasure to meet, train, coach, and consult with thousands of good people in the business world. They want to make money and at the same time find a way to also make a difference in the world. They are successful, highly intelligent, creative, empathetic, and good communicators. They are also getting burned out and tired of all the ego-posturing and corporate b.s. These good people are seeking more productive ways of thinking and being in their work life. Most of them have what I call a high “Courage Quotient” and are willing to rock the boat in the name of meaning and growth. They are hungry to help grow organizations, develop leaders, and build teams that practice what they preach, and also have the courage to speak and act with integrity and radical, thoughtful honesty. They want their work to have meaning, challenge them to face their fears, and push them to new levels of learning, growth, and financial abundance. These are people with an uncommon level of commitment, perseverance, and passion. Some

of them have found careers where this gets to show every day, and others have it bottled up within them, ready to burst.

This book is about new ways to think, talk, and execute an approach to attract more of the right kinds of new clients and business opportunities. It offers a larger philosophical framework and specific, proven examples of how to get better results, without wasting so much time and energy. In addition, I am interested in helping growth oriented professionals become more conscious and sophisticated about how their approach to engaging prospects and clients can help them not only in business but in their personal lives as well.

If nothing else, I trust you will find an interesting collection and arrangement of thoughts, guiding principles, and tangible ideas that will challenge your status quo.

It is a scary, dynamic, and incredibly exciting time in our world. There is more abundance than ever before for many, but also more scarcity, fear, and anxiety. A new wave of tolerance for mediocrity and resistance to change seems to have taken root. I offer this book to inspire and challenge others to passionately pursue a commitment to interrupting unproductive patterns, create sustainable change, and generate significant, quantum leaps in results.

Be curious. Have fun. Do and say courageous things.

Take care,

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About the Author

Tom Batchelder specializes in coaching progressive business leaders in sales excellence and life success. He has over 17 years experience in sales, management, entrepreneurship, and coaching. Working with Fortune 500 organizations as well as with emerging small businesses, Tom excels at helping clients control their sales process, shorten selling cycles and effectively increase profit margins. In addition, he has a personal vision to use his work in the professional world to affect how people interact at home with their family. Tom's "Million Kids Project" has a mission to help the parents of one million children live with passion & purpose at work—and at home.

Tom received a B.A. in Communications from Indiana University and has completed extensive graduate level studies in counseling psychology at the California Institute of Integral Studies in San Francisco. He lives with his wife Lisa and son Nicholas in Indianapolis, Indiana.

About "Barking Up a Dead Horse"

This is a special advance release of "Barking Up a Dead Horse." The complete book will be available October 25, 2007. For further information, please visit perfcency.com/barking.