

The 4 Secrets of Big-Time Producers

By Dean Cipriano

It's hard to think like a winner if you don't know how the winners think to begin with. Believe me, I should know. I spent my first several years in insurance and annuity sales stumbling from one prescribed sales program to the next, blindly hoping that what the home office recommended for everyone would work well for me.

Well, it didn't. And sadly, even today, centralized information often doesn't work for agents fresh into the field and setting out on their journey to the Million Dollar Round Table. So, what does work? Reinventing the approach you have to insurance and annuity sales. And I've boiled that process down to four hard-earned secrets of big-time producers. And I should know by now--I'm finally one of them.

Top producers don't make cold calls. No matter what you may have been told, it remains a central tenet in our business that the top producers don't pressure people. They don't push. They don't sell "products." In fact, they do little more than communicate information to people whom they would like to add to their practice. They know, in short, that it isn't selling via cold calls that drives traffic, it's crossing over to the client's side and creating a compelling sense of wanting to buy that drives business to the door.

Top producers have repositioned themselves to be financial consultants, not financial salespeople. Fitting hand-in-glove with the idea above, successful agents have made a shift from "pushing product" to sharing knowledge with their clients. When you provide this type of leadership and education to interested people, their quest to get in on your knowledge becomes the momentum behind the sales process.

Top producers receive a continual stream of unsolicited referrals from CPAs, mortgage brokers, attorneys and other professional peers. Note: Top producers don't ask for referrals, they receive referrals. And the reason they receive referrals is they are perceived by clients and outside professionals alike as being knowledgeable, and being positioned so differently from the competition that outsiders are compelled to refer people to them.

Top producers delegate. They realize that they can't be making money if they're sitting around licking envelopes, dropping flyers in the mail, or stopping by the print shop to pick up postcards. Delegating the grunt work allows the agent to spend his or her time talking to clients and prospects.

Think of it this way: The average amount of talk time required for a salesperson to sell a policy is two hours. If an average commission is \$1,000 per policy, the agent is making \$500 per hour. Anytime you're performing tasks that you could hire out for \$10 an hour, you're costing yourself \$490 or more per hour. Ouch. Sounds like you ought to delegate.

When you break it all down this way, it seems pretty easy, doesn't it? Well, in future articles, I'll go into more detail about each one of these characteristics for you. But for now, let me end with the definition of insanity. You see, one definition of insanity is doing the same things over and over again and expecting different results. In order to get different results, better results, you need to start doing things differently. I'll leave you with that for now.