

## Unlock your sales power



***Why should you read *Unlock Your Sales Power* — and what makes it different from every other sales book?***

*Most sales books teach you what to do. This one helps you understand **why you're not doing it**. Do you know what to say, who to call, what the next step is — but still hesitate, procrastinate, or avoid the task altogether? You're not alone. Over 85% of salespeople experience some form of **Sales Call Reluctance**, the silent killer of performance. It's not about laziness. It's not about lack of skill. It's about invisible emotional roadblocks.*

***This book is based on 40+ years of scientific research*** into Sales Call Reluctance and gives you not just insight — but proven tools, tests, and strategies to overcome what's holding you back.

# Chapter 1: Sales Call Reluctance – Your Invisible Opponent

There's a hidden enemy that many salespeople battle with every day: **sales call reluctance**. These are the psychological and practical barriers that prevent us from reaching our full sales potential. Maybe you've felt that knot in your stomach before making a cold call, or you've put off following up with a potential client due to a vague sense of discomfort. You're not alone. Studies show that more than 85% of salespeople worldwide experience at least one form of hesitation when it comes to contacting new prospects.



Many aren't even fully aware of what's holding them back—which makes it difficult to ask for help. The consequences are serious: research on "sales call reluctance" shows that up to 80% of new salespeople fail within their first year because of these internal barriers.

So, what exactly is sales call reluctance? Simply put, it's anything that stops a salesperson from doing the things necessary to succeed in sales. Often, it's

rooted in internal blocks: fear of rejection, anxiety about being pushy, shame around being seen as "just a salesperson," hesitation to reach out to senior decision-makers, or even an inexplicable resistance to certain sales activities. These barriers act like invisible brakes. You might know exactly what you *should* do—like calling more prospects or confidently asking for the deal—but something inside holds you back. And that hesitation hurts your results.

The tricky part is that these barriers are often subtle and hard to detect. They disguise themselves. "I'm just being thorough in my preparation" might be procrastination driven by fear. Or we tell ourselves, "I don't want to disturb the customer," when in fact we're scared of hearing a no. By recognizing that these internal blocks exist—and acknowledging how they influence our behavior—we take the first step toward overcoming them.

In the chapters that follow, we'll dive deeper into the most common types of sales call reluctance and learn concrete strategies for dealing with them. The goal is to help you take back control over your fears and behavior, so you can unlock your full potential and truly **unlock your sales power**—and give your sales performance the boost it deserves.

*(In the next chapter, we'll focus directly on the most common barriers salespeople face in their daily work. You may recognize yourself in one or more of them—and that's perfectly natural. By naming the obstacle, you also start finding your way around it.)*

## Chapter 2: Common Barriers in a Salesperson's Daily Work

Every salesperson eventually encounters obstacles. Some of these are external—like tough competition or poor leads—but the most deceptive ones are often the internal barriers we carry with us. Here, we'll walk through some of the most common psychological barriers that hold salespeople back in their everyday work. Do you recognize yourself in any of these?



- **Telephobia (Fear of Telephone Contact):** A feeling of discomfort when contacting clients over the phone. The salesperson hesitates to pick up the phone, perhaps out of fear of disturbing the client or being rejected. This often leads to avoiding follow-ups with previous contacts, causing potential deals to quietly slip away. Phone anxiety is a classic sales barrier—despite logically knowing that calls are necessary, the emotional resistance remains.

- **Social Self-Conscious with "Big" Clients:** This is an emotional hesitation to approach people perceived as superior in status—such as senior executives or very wealthy, influential clients. The salesperson feels inferior to those with power or prestige and holds back from initiating contact. This type of fear—sometimes called social differentiation—can cause one to avoid highly lucrative prospects simply out of nervousness.
- **Reluctance to Mix Friendship and Business:** Some salespeople find it uncomfortable to sell to friends and acquaintances. They don't want to come across as intrusive in personal relationships and therefore avoid asking their network for business opportunities. In doing so, they miss out on valuable referrals and introductions that friends could have provided. This barrier is sometimes called "Protecting Friends"—keeping business and friendship so separate that it leads to lost opportunities.
- **Yielder (Indecisiveness):** Here, the salesperson has an inner resistance to being perceived as aggressive or "too salesy." Ironically, this often leads to being overly cautious and failing to ask for the sale at all. The salesperson might tell themselves, "The customer knows best; I shouldn't push," or spend all their time building rapport and providing information without moving toward a close. This indecisiveness stems from a reflexive fear of intruding—and as a result, even good relationships often fail to turn into business.

- **Doomsayer (Catastrophic Thinking, Worrying):** The individual imagines the worst possible outcome in every sales situation. “If I call now, the client will get angry.” “If I push a little harder, they might cancel the contract.” This constant worrying—always anticipating a no or a disaster as the most likely outcome—drains the salesperson’s energy and initiative. Every minute spent fearing what might go wrong is a minute that could have been invested in proactive selling.

These five examples are part of the **16 psychological sales call reluctance patterns** identified by researchers George W. Dudley, Shannon R. Goodson, and Trelitha Bryant. Naturally, most individuals experience a combination of these, and each person has their own unique mix. On average, a salesperson struggles with about five different types of barriers that limit their true potential.

You might be highly driven when it comes to prospecting but feel resistance around discussing money and pricing (price conversations can create significant anxiety for many). Or you might be fearless when making cold calls but procrastinate when it comes to writing proposals—afraid of receiving a written “no.”

The key is to recognize which barriers affect you the most. Take a moment to reflect: In which sales situations do you feel the most discomfort or insecurity? Is it when you’re reaching out to a new prospect? When you’re trying to close the deal? Or maybe when you’re speaking with very senior people? By pinpointing the emotion and the situation, you can start linking it to one of these barriers.

That awareness is your first step toward overcoming it.

Importantly, **sales call reluctance is not about a lack of knowledge or skill**. You can be extremely knowledgeable about your product and fully understand the sales process—and still be held back by an internal barrier. As one expert put it: many salespeople “know what they should do, but don’t understand why they have such difficulty doing it.” In other words—they don’t lack insight into *what* needs to be done, but something inside prevents them from acting on that insight.

In the next chapter, we’ll explore strategies and methods for overcoming these barriers. Because no matter which personal sales demons you’re facing, there is hope: with the right tools, mindset, and practice, every salesperson can learn to manage—and even eliminate—their sales call reluctance.

## Chapter 3: Strategies for Overcoming Sales Call Reluctance

Most salespeople know what they *should* do — and yet, sometimes, they still hold back. It’s rarely because they don’t know how, don’t understand, or don’t want to. More often, something subtler is at play: an inner block that slows them down. The good news? These blocks can be managed — not with miracle cures, but with the right strategies and a mindset grounded in self-awareness and psychological safety.





## Shift Perspective – From Seller to Problem-Solver

One of the simplest ways to ease discomfort before contacting a client is to reframe your role. Many find “selling” hard — but *helping* someone? That feels different. When you start to see yourself more as a problem-solver than a salesperson, both your mindset and your motivation begin to shift.

Instead of “taking something” (the customer’s money), you’re offering something valuable. And customers often sense that shift. When you’re genuinely curious about their needs and challenges, you don’t come across as pushy — you come across as relevant and interested. And you might notice that the hesitation to reach out fades, because what you’re doing feels meaningful.

## About That “No”

No one likes hearing “no.” That’s human. But it’s worth reminding yourself: a no from a customer is not a no to you *as a person*. Most customers don’t even know you well enough to reject *you* — what they’re turning down is an offer, a

product, or a timing that simply doesn’t fit right now.

Sometimes it helps to ask: “What’s the worst that can happen if they say no?” The answer is usually far less dramatic than the fear suggests. And if it takes five no’s to get a yes — then each no is just one step closer.

## Prepare – But Not More Than You Need To

Preparation builds confidence. Knowing your customer, their industry, your solution — that’s foundational. But there’s a tipping point where preparation stops helping and starts becoming a way to delay acting.

This is the Sales Call Reluctance pattern called **Over-Preparer**. It often starts with good intentions: you want to be professional, respectful, thorough. Then uncertainty creeps in. “Have I covered everything?” “What if they ask something I can’t answer?” So, you prepare more. Hours can go into planning the “perfect” call. The problem? The perfect call never happens.

A telltale sign of Over-Preparation is that you never feel “ready” — no matter how much you prep. It turns into a way to postpone action, not support it. And ironically, it can even lead you to talk more than listen — when all you really wanted was to do a good job.

The trick is to find a level of preparation that’s **good enough** — not flawless. To feel, “I’m ready enough,” and act from there.

## Practice in Reality – Not Just Theory

It's tempting to think that courage comes from knowledge. But confidence isn't built in the head — it's built in the body. Through action. By doing what scares you. One call at a time. One step at a time. Preferably with a low bar for success.

If, for example, phone calls make you anxious, maybe your first step is just to write down three names. Next step: dial the first one. Then the next. Some calls go well. Some don't. It matters less than you think — what matters is that you're practicing.

Visualization can also help. Imagine a call going well. Or say to yourself, out loud: "I don't need to be perfect — just present."

## Prospecting – Make It Easier on Yourself

One of the most common sales blocks isn't about meetings or presentations — it's about getting started. Finding new customers. Taking that first step. It's easy to put off. And the longer you wait, the harder it feels.

Here, structure is your best friend. Decide that, for example, Tuesdays from 10–11 are "sacred" prospecting time. No meetings. No emails. No excuses. Make it a routine — not a decision you have to make each time.

And lower the bar. The goal isn't to land a deal every time — it's to do the work that leads to one. Think: "Today I planted seeds — the harvest comes later."

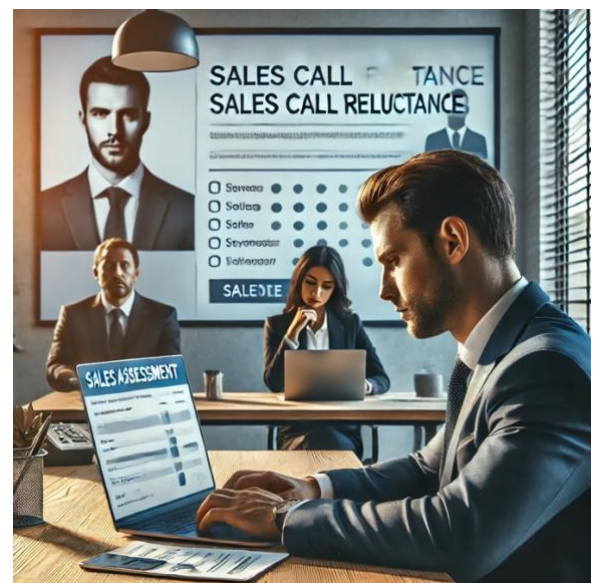
## Ask for Support When You Need It

You're not alone. Many salespeople — even the highly experienced — struggle

with doubt, hesitation, and inner obstacles. That's completely normal. But it doesn't mean you have to carry it all yourself.

Maybe there's a colleague you can practice with. Maybe your manager is more understanding than you think. Or maybe there are tools — like the SPQ Gold/FSA — that can help you see what specific patterns you're dealing with. Sometimes just knowing "It's not just me. And there are ways forward." is all you need.

## Chapter 4: Spotting Sales Call Reluctance in Your Team – A Manager's Perspective



For sales leaders, Sales Call Reluctance within the team is often an invisible challenge. Performance might drop without any clear external cause — the product is the same, the market hasn't changed — and yet, some team members are clearly underperforming. What's going on?

The truth is: many of your salespeople may be struggling with internal barriers just like the ones we've already described — but they rarely talk about them. They may not even fully recognize them. They just delay, avoid, or get stuck. And depending on the type of Call Reluctance they have; they procrastinate in different ways.

**Over-Preparers** often spend excessive time getting ready, never feeling quite confident enough to move forward. **Yielders** might wait endlessly for the “right” moment to contact a prospect, hoping to never seem pushy. And they're still waiting.

In many sales cultures, there's no safe space to admit fear or hesitation. Salespeople want to appear confident and in control. Even to themselves.

As their leader, your first step is simply this: be open to the possibility that mental barriers exist — and start looking for signs.

### Look for Behavioral Clues

Does one rep always fall behind on a specific type of activity, like reaching out to new leads? Does someone avoid following up, or hesitate to speak with senior decision-makers?

These patterns might not be laziness. They might be fear.

Numbers can reveal what words might hide. A salesperson with many first meetings but very few closes might have **Indecisiveness** Reluctance — struggling to ask for the order. Another might send dozens of emails but never pick up the phone — avoiding the discomfort of real conversation.

Start there. Use data not to judge, but to spark a conversation.

### Create a Safe Space for Honest Dialogue

The goal isn't to interrogate. It's to explore.

Ask open, reflective questions:

- “How do you feel about calling a CEO to pitch our solution?”
- “If our sales deck isn't perfect, how does that affect your confidence in presenting it?”

These kinds of questions can surface deep-seated concerns. You might learn that the rep is anxious about status differences (Social Self-Doubt), or is stuck in perfectionism (Over-Preparation).

Using a discomfort scale from 1 to 10 can also help reps put words to vague feelings. And if you want a more structured approach, consider using the **SPQ Gold/FSA** diagnostic tool. It provides a detailed map of the 16 types of Call Reluctance, and how strongly each one may be affecting a person's performance.

You'll find accredited consultants for this tool on our website:

[www.confidentapproach.com/about-us/accredited-partners](http://www.confidentapproach.com/about-us/accredited-partners)

### Reflect What You See – Gently

Some reps may not have the language for what they're experiencing. That's okay. Help them reflect by offering careful observations:

- “You're doing a great job nurturing existing clients. But I've noticed new meetings aren't being booked as often. What do you think is behind that?”

Frame it as curiosity, not criticism. Make it clear: your goal is to support, not to scold. Every rep struggles with something — your role is to help them work through it.

### **Consider Using Diagnostic Tools and Professional Support**

If time or internal resources are limited, consider bringing in an external consultant certified in the SPQ Gold/FSA test. The tool doesn't just flag performance issues — it identifies underlying psychological patterns and offers actionable insights for development plans.

Salespeople, on average, wrestle with five types of Reluctance. Knowing which ones active helps are avoid wasted effort and gets straight to the root of the problem. The result? Salespeople who sell more — and feel better doing it.

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### **Final Thought for Sales Leaders**

When a rep underperforms, it's tempting to assume they're not trying hard enough. But more often, there's a silent psychological barrier in the way.

Your job is not just to push for results — it's to uncover the invisible blockers and help your team break through. Because behind every hesitation, there's a human being trying to do their best.

And the moment you help them feel safe enough to name their fear — you've already changed the game.

## **Chapter 5: Clearing Barriers in Your Sales Team – Coaching and Support**



Spotting Call Reluctance is just half the battle — the next step is helping your salespeople overcome it. As a leader, you play a critical role in creating the environment that allows them to succeed. This is about coaching, support, and culture. Let's explore how you can help your team move past internal barriers and truly thrive.

### **Build an Open, Supportive Feedback Culture**

Many salespeople hesitate to reveal their struggles, fearing judgment. That's why you, as a leader, must actively signal that it's safe to talk about challenges. Show some vulnerability yourself: share a weakness or fear you've had to work through. By admitting that even you are a work in progress, you lower the threshold for others to open up.

Be clear that the purpose is growth, not blame.



When a salesperson dares to admit a hurdle — respond calmly and constructively.

For example, if someone says,

*"I really struggle with contacting new prospects; it's hard every time,"*

you might respond:

*"Thank you for sharing that. Let's figure out how we can tackle it together."*

Avoid minimizing or brushing it off. Saying things like, *"Just toughen up"* or *"It's just part of the job"* risks making the barrier worse. Instead, take their experience seriously. You're there to help remove obstacles, not to shame them for having them.

## **Tailor Your Coaching – One Size Does Not Fit All**

Each salesperson is unique, with their own mix of strengths and struggles. Your coaching should be individualized too.

Once you've mapped someone's specific challenges (through conversations, behavior patterns, or testing), work together to build a plan.

For instance, if someone struggles with **Phone Reluctance**, you might:

- In the first week, sit beside them and make a few calls together.
- In the second week, they call independently but check in daily.

Be aware that reluctance to call can stem from different sources. Someone with **Indecisiveness** might fear "disturbing" the prospect. Someone with **Stage Fright** may hesitate simply because others can overhear them — you'll often see these reps sneaking into empty conference rooms to make their calls.

Adapt your approach. Offer scripts, create small low-pressure call lists, or start with less intimidating prospects.

The key is steady, manageable steps — and constant reassurance that you're there for them.

Follow up regularly. Celebrate small victories:

*"I noticed you made five new calls this week — great work!"*

Positive reinforcement helps rewire the emotional association with effort — from dread to pride.

Sometimes a salesperson needs technical skills training to overcome a barrier. If someone struggles to close deals because they don't know *how* to ask for the sale, that's a skill gap. You can fix that through a mini-workshop, peer mentoring, or a targeted course.

Other barriers require mental training: building self-esteem, managing internal narratives.

If a rep tends to focus only on what went wrong, you might introduce a daily exercise:

*"Write down three things you did well today."*

Leading by example matters too.

If you want your team to face their weaknesses, show that you're working on yours.

For instance:

*"Handling objections about price used to intimidate me too. I got better by practicing X and Y."*

Courage is contagious.

So is fear.

If you avoid tough conversations or blame external circumstances, your team will learn that too.

## Small Steps and Patience

Rome wasn't built in a day — and sales barriers don't disappear overnight.

Be patient. Set realistic goals.

It's tempting to expect instant results after coaching, but behavior change takes time. Focus on **small, steady improvements**.

Celebrate progress, not just outcomes. If a rep has worked hard to increase prospecting calls, acknowledge it even if closed deals haven't materialized yet. Building new habits takes energy — and positive reinforcement helps that energy grow.

If a salesperson seems to lose passion for their work, listen carefully. Is it boredom? Frustration after too many rejections? Early signs of burnout?

Act early. Adjust goals if needed. Encourage rest. Show that you care about them as a human being, not just as a performer.

Salespeople who feel seen and supported recover faster — and come back stronger.

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## Final Thought

Your role as a sales leader is twofold: **coach** and **cheerleader**.

You help identify the invisible obstacles.  
You offer tools.  
You train side-by-side.  
You celebrate each brave step.

You do it all without judgment.

By treating every rep as an individual — and meeting them where they are — you

and your team will slowly but surely scale the barriers that once seemed impossible.

And when that happens, the results will speak for themselves.

## Chapter 6: Build a Sales Culture Without Barriers



Beyond coaching individuals, every sales leader must take a broader view: the culture and structure of the sales organization. Many barriers can either be prevented or reinforced depending on the environment your salespeople work in. In this chapter, we explore how you, as a leader, can shape a culture and system where internal obstacles are minimized — a space where people thrive, dare, and grow.

### Introduce a Clear Sales Process — and Keep It Alive

One common reason for hesitation or inconsistent performance is the lack of a clear structure. If every rep is left to improvise, uncertainty arises about how to best move a deal forward.

By implementing a formalized sales process, you give your team a clear roadmap. The process should outline essential steps (e.g., prospecting → first meeting → proposal → negotiation → closing → follow-up) and define what behaviors are expected at each stage.

This structure becomes a support system — reps always know the next step. It relieves the mental load of guessing and reduces the risk of getting stuck. A strong, value-driven process also encourages the right behavior: listening to the customer, building relationships, and not rushing or skipping important steps.

But a process on paper means nothing unless it's lived in the culture. Train it. Talk about it. Practice it through role-plays. Use it in pipeline meetings (“What’s the next step for this deal?”). Hold people accountable but also explain the *why* behind the structure — so it doesn’t come across as just red tape.

When your whole team shares the same language and rhythm, stress and inconsistency decrease. A good process is like a guardrail — it keeps you from going off the road, even when you’re tired or unsure.

## Sales Training That Actually Sticks



Many companies respond to poor results by sending salespeople to be training. But traditional sales courses can be like pouring water on a duck — if nothing reinforces the learning afterward, it rolls right off.

Studies have called typical sales training a “black hole” where money disappears with little return. Why? Because most training focuses on methodology and knowledge but doesn’t address the real-life behavior or internal resistance.

Knowing what to do is not the same as doing it.

Sales barriers often sit between knowing and doing — and that’s the part we need to reach.

As a leader, your job is to turn training into a continuous process. Great training addresses both skills and mindset — it teaches techniques but also builds confidence and motivation.

Follow up on what’s learned:  
Practice the methods in meetings.  
Set goals tied to them.  
And most importantly — lead by example.  
Show your team how you apply the tools yourself.

Mentorship helps too: pair experienced reps with newer ones to transfer not just knowledge, but courage.

Since research shows people forget up to 84% of what they’ve learned within three months, plan for repetition:  
Refresher sessions. Quizzes. Friendly competitions.

When evaluating performance, don’t only measure results — also recognize behaviors.

If your team is training on asking open-ended questions, reward those who *do* it, not just those who *close* deals.

This is how you embed training into your culture — and make it last.

## **Fight Negative Stereotypes and Build Pride**

In some organizations (or society at large), sales still suffers from harmful stereotypes — that salespeople are pushy, manipulative, or greedy.

If reps start to internalize those views, they may feel shame or resistance about their role — and performance drops. They might subconsciously avoid success to avoid becoming the "bad guy."

As a leader, it's your job to build a proud, professional sales identity.

Ditch the sarcasm. One company used to award their top performer with a Scrooge McDuck figurine — as a joke about greed. No wonder people felt conflicted about succeeding.

Instead, celebrate honorable sales behavior.

The rep who went the extra mile for a customer.

The one who was refreshingly honest, even when it cost them the deal.

Tell stories that connect sales efforts with positive impact. Show how selling is about solving, not hustling. Make it meaningful again.

## **Prioritize Wellbeing and Sustainable Performance**

Sales is mentally demanding. Constant rejection, big targets, and often irregular hours take a toll. If your company culture rewards people for "grinding until they crash," your reps will either burn out or check out — both of which are performance barriers.

Promote balance. Normalize rest.  
Encourage breaks.

Research shows that over 70% of salespeople struggle with mental health at some point in their careers. Anxiety and stress drain energy, dull performance, and spread into the team's atmosphere. It becomes a shared barrier.

Support your team by encouraging healthy routines.

Declare it okay to log off at a certain hour.  
Create space for wellness activities.

Speak openly about mental health — make it less taboo.

Resilience — the ability to bounce back — is something you can actively nurture.  
Set the tone yourself.

Take your vacation. Show that personal life matters too.

Be there when someone's having a hard time.

Salespeople who feel seen and supported don't just recover — they grow stronger.  
And they come back with more to give.

## **Final Thoughts**

The culture you create can either build barriers or clear them away.

Build one with clarity, learning, pride, and care.

When that's in place, your team can stop wasting energy on fear or friction — and start focusing on what they do best: creating value and selling.



(So far, we've focused on developing existing salespeople. In the next chapters, we look forward — how to recruit and onboard the right people in a way that prevents sales barriers before they ever begin.)

## Chapter 7: Recruit the Right Salespeople from the Start



One of the most effective ways to prevent Sales Call Reluctance in your team is to make sure you recruit the right kind of salespeople from the beginning. Hiring the “right” candidate is less about them knowing everything on day one, and more about whether they possess the qualities and potential required for long-term sales success. Skills can be developed, but certain core traits and attitudes make it significantly easier for a salesperson to overcome internal barriers. In this chapter, we’ll explore what to look for in candidates and how to identify those who are likely to thrive—without being held back—once they’re onboard.

### Traits to Look for in Top Performing Salespeople

Research and experience point to several key traits among successful salespeople. A comprehensive study of 500 sales professionals found that drive was the single most important success factor—81% of top performers ranked personal drive as number one. A driven individual has an internal engine and motivation to reach their goals, which means they tend to act despite obstacles. Closely tied to drive is ambition—the desire to grow, take on greater challenges, and aim higher. An ambitious salesperson won’t settle for average results; they’ll look for ways around obstacles to become the best.

Another critical trait is problem-solving ability. Selling constantly presents unexpected situations—clients raise objections, deals hit snags, needs shift. Top salespeople see such hurdles as interesting problems to solve rather than roadblocks. If a salesperson knows how to solve problems creatively, there are few challenges in the sales career they can’t work around. During interviews, test this with case studies or hypothetical scenarios: “How would you save a deal that’s falling apart?” or “How would you handle a customer who suddenly changes their demands?” Look for structured thinking and resourcefulness.

Resilience is essential in a role where “no” is common. It’s about taking rejection in stride and bouncing back quickly after a setback. A resilient salesperson absorbs the loss, learns from it, and moves forward without losing momentum. During recruitment, ask for examples where the candidate failed or received criticism—and how they handled it. Do they dwell on failure or see it as a growth opportunity? A strong candidate should be

able to show they came back stronger after a difficult period.

A frequently cited success factor is a positive mindset or optimism. Seeing the future through a hopeful lens helps salespeople keep pushing even when things look bleak. There's fascinating research here: in a well-known insurance industry study, psychologist Martin Seligman tested the optimism levels of salespeople. The result? The most optimistic reps outsold their more pessimistic peers by up to 57% over a two-year span. The optimists didn't give up as easily—they genuinely believed the next deal would be better, and it often became a self-fulfilling prophecy. That's why it's smart to try and assess a candidate's core attitude: do they ask about opportunities, see solutions, or get stuck on obstacles during the interview?

Other useful traits include communication skills and empathy (can they tune into the customer and build rapport?), a healthy competitive spirit (the will to win often drives results), and integrity (honesty and ethics—salespeople with strong integrity build trust and long-term relationships). But when it comes to avoiding Sales Call Reluctance, the critical ones remain drive, problem-solving, resilience, and optimism. These traits either prevent the barriers from emerging or enable the person to push through them.

When studying selling styles, we found six dominant approaches: Needs-Oriented, Relationship-Oriented, Competition-Oriented, Image-Oriented, Product-Oriented, and Service-Oriented. Each of these styles has a corresponding customer buying style. Like a walkie-talkie: if your customer "receives" on channel five, it doesn't matter how skilled you are as a salesperson if you're "broadcasting" on

channel three. One key finding was that competitive sellers scored significantly higher on motivation and goal focus. They often build markets faster, but their relationships may be less long-term—they constantly need to sell again. Thankfully, most salespeople master at least two styles.

So, understanding your buyers' styles should influence the sales profile you hire. A top salesperson in one industry could underperform in another if there's a mismatch

### **The Recruitment Process: How to Find the Gold**

So how do you spot these traits in candidates? Design your recruitment process to give insight into their behaviors and attitudes. Here are some tips:

- **Behavioral Interview Questions:** Instead of theoretical questions, ask about real-life examples. For instance: "Describe a time when you lost a key deal or customer. What happened, and how did you handle it?" Listen for resilience (did they bounce back?), problem-solving (what did they do to save it?), and attitude (do they take ownership or blame external factors?). Another great question is: "Can you share an example of a creative solution you came up with to win a customer or solve a sales challenge?"—this directly tests problem-solving.
- **Simulations and Roleplays:** Have the candidate go through a sales scenario—maybe a roleplay where you act as a skeptical client. How do they react? Do they back off or engage with curiosity? Roleplays reveal natural tendencies under

pressure. Strong candidates often smile when they hear an objection and ask a follow-up question. Weaker ones might change the subject or fold under pressure.

- **Personality Tests and Practical Exercises:** Consider validated sales-related assessments. There are tools that measure optimism/pessimism, grit, social confidence, and more.
- **Sales Action Profile (SPQ Gold/FSA):** Use advanced psychometric testing that measures both the salesperson's motivational drivers and their barriers—like Call Reluctance, Goal Diffusion, or Performance Anxiety. These give an extra data point to compare candidates. For example, if someone scores high on Telephobia, and you still choose to hire them, you'll know they need intensive support and training in that area. If activity is a critical success factor for your role—use this test. It identifies which candidates are most likely to take the volume of action needed for success, so you can focus on coaching the rest.
- **Reference Checks with Focus on Attitude:** When speaking to references, go beyond results. Ask: “How did X respond to setbacks?” or “Can you give an example of when X had to persevere under pressure?” Former managers or colleagues can often reveal what the résumé doesn't. If you hear “X never gave up, even when we lost hope,” you might have found your resilient optimist. If the reference says, “X got stressed with difficult clients,” that may be a red flag.

Keep in mind: team diversity is valuable—different personalities complement each other. But some things shouldn't be compromised: integrity, drive, and a positive attitude. The saying “hire for attitude, train for skill” remains wise. You can always teach product knowledge and tools. But someone with a poor attitude or low energy won't thrive, even if their CV sparkles.

### Avoiding the Trap of a Bad Hire

A bad sales hire can be expensive in more ways than one. Not only might they miss targets, but they could also drag down team morale—or even drive customers away. Plus, it takes time and resources to redo the recruitment process if someone quits early. It pays to be selective. Better to spend extra time assessing fit than to rush to fill a seat.

And remember—it's not just you are choosing the candidate. The candidate is also choosing you. Top sales talent usually has options. Be honest about expectations and company culture during recruitment. That way, you'll attract those who are truly right for your environment. If you value things like teamwork and ethics, say so clearly—those who don't align will self-select out, which is a good thing.

To summarize: look for candidates who embody the traits that make selling easier—driven, solution-oriented, resilient, optimistic individuals with low Call Reluctance and high motivation and goal focus. Studies show that focusing on these factors during hiring significantly increases the odds that your new hires will hit their targets and contribute to team culture and growth.

Hiring the right people lays the foundation. But remember even the most promising talent still needs sharpening. In

the next chapter, we'll look at how to ensure your new hires hit the ground running and avoid tripping over early hurdles through smart onboarding and ramp-up strategies.

## Chapter 9: When Courage Triumphs Over Fear

Fear is a natural response when we step outside our comfort zone. In sales, fear comes in many forms — fear of rejection, fear of being pushy, fear of failure. But here's an important truth: you can't be brave without also being afraid. Courage doesn't come in the absence of fear — it is born in the very presence of it.

In this chapter, we dive into the role of courage in sales. We explore how courage isn't about being fearless, but about acting despite fear. And we show how each small act of bravery — every call made despite nerves, every proposal offered despite the fear of a no — builds self-respect and lasting success.

### Why Courage Is Crucial in Sales

Sales is, at its core, a human and emotional process. You're offering something to another person — and that always carries a risk of rejection. No clever sales method can eliminate that entirely. So, to succeed in sales, you need the inner strength to:

- Tolerate uncertainty
- Dare to ask for the business
- Handle rejection without taking it personally
- Feel discomfort — and act anyway

This is where courage steps in. It's what gets you to pick up the phone, even when you're unsure. It's what drives you to speak to the decision-maker, even when you feel small in comparison. It's what helps you believe in your solution and the value it brings, even when doubt whispers otherwise.



### The Power of Courage vs. the Grip of Fear

When fear takes control, we start avoiding. We procrastinate. We make excuses. We tell ourselves, "I just need to prepare a little more." But avoidance feeds fear — the longer we wait, the bigger and more impossible it seems.

Courage works the opposite way: each time you act despite fear, the fear shrinks. You teach your brain that what you feared wasn't nearly as dangerous as you thought. Over time, you can even become comfortable in situations that once made you panic.

So, courage doesn't eliminate fear — it builds the habit of moving forward anyway.

### How to Strengthen Your Sales Courage

Here are some practical strategies to grow your courage in sales:



- **Daily acts of bravery**  
Set a small goal each day that requires courage — a call, an email, a conversation you would normally avoid. Courage grows through repetition, not one-time heroics.
- **Celebrate courage, not just results**  
Whether the customer says yes or no, celebrate that you took action. Courage is about effort, not just outcome.
- **Connect your action to purpose**  
Remind yourself why you're doing this — to help the customer, to grow, to create opportunities for yourself and others.
- **Visualize courage**  
Picture yourself entering the situation you fear and handling it calmly and confidently. Mental rehearsal is a powerful way to build readiness.
- **Normalize discomfort**  
Don't expect courage to feel good. It often feels uncomfortable and shaky — and that's not a sign you're doing it wrong. It's a sign you're growing.

## A Personal Reflection

Many salespeople have told me their biggest breakthroughs didn't come from learning a new closing technique — but from doing something they had long avoided. Calling that “too big” customer. Asking for the deal, even when their gut tightened with anxiety.

That moment — when you do something you once thought impossible — changes you. It boosts your sales, yes. But more importantly, it rewrites your self-image.

You begin to see yourself as someone who can. Someone who dares. Someone bigger than their fear.

And that, more than any method, is what separates good salespeople from truly great ones.

## Courage in Action – Real-Life Stories

### Example 1: Three Years of Silence – and One Call That Changed Everything

A salesperson I worked with hadn't called one of their top customers for three years. A combination of *Yielder tendencies* and *Telephobia* had created a spiral of avoidance and shame. When we started coaching, they got angry at first — a last line of defense. But we didn't let go. Using CBT-inspired tools, we slowly began to break the fear down.

Finally, they made the call. The customer was furious — rightfully so. He had been forced to buy from a competitor for three years. But something else happened too. The call led to an open conversation, an apology, and before long, the client came back — with a multimillion-euro deal.

It only took one call. And the courage to make it.

### Example 2: When a Whole Organization Avoided the Conflict

In another case, the problem wasn't one individual — it was an entire company shaped by *Yielder behaviors*. A product issue had sparked a dispute with a major client. The customer claimed they followed all instructions. The company disagreed but, out of fear of conflict, chose to stay quiet.

Sales plummeted. Warehouses were shut down. Market share evaporated.

Then, a courageous coach helped the leadership face the situation. Executive-level conversations were initiated. Negotiations followed. The conflict was resolved, the relationship salvaged, and the sales revived.

Courage was the difference between walking away and standing up.

### **Example 3: A Company That Needed to Learn to Win**

As a young salesperson, I once attended a conference titled *Dare to Win*. It struck a nerve in a company where modesty and “not standing out” were part of the culture. Wanting to be the best, being proud of your success — it was almost taboo.

But that event changed things. Courage was reframed as a virtue. People began to see pride, performance, and ambition not as arrogance — but as service. To help customers better than anyone else.

And results soon followed.

## **Chapter 10: Unlock Your Sales Power – and Your Life**



What you’ve just read isn’t just about sales.

It’s about taking charge of your life.

It’s about stopping the cycle of fear-based decision-making.

It’s about ending the habit of postponing what really matters.

It’s about standing in your own power — and acting, even when it feels uncomfortable.

Sales is just a mirror. It reflects our habits, our inner obstacles, and our hidden strengths.

Those who dare to confront their Sales Call Reluctance often discover something even more important: the ability to grow deeply — as a person.

That’s why *Unlock Your Sales Power* isn’t about being “pushier” or learning fancy closing tricks.

We’re not saying you need to talk faster, shout louder, or squeeze your clients into submission.

Quite the opposite.

This book is about becoming more authentic, more courageous, and more present — in every customer conversation, and in every step of your workday.

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### **When You Let Go of Fear:**

- You dare to contact the customers you dream of
- You steer conversations where they need to go
- You stand tall in the value you bring
- You ask for the business — with pride and respect

It's about becoming the best version of yourself — both as a salesperson and as a human being.

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## **A New Standard of Success**

Traditional sales training often measures one thing: more calls, more meetings, more deals.

We measure something else: the freedom to act without being held back by invisible barriers.

Because when fear no longer runs the show:

- Sales becomes more enjoyable
- Your days feel lighter
- Your performance goes up — without costing you your joy

That's a different kind of success.

More sustainable.

More fulfilling.

More powerful.

And it's available to anyone willing to take the steps we've shared in this book.

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## **You Are Your Greatest Asset**

Whether you are:

- An experienced salesperson who wants to reach a new level
- A sales manager who wants to help your team reach its full potential
- A recruiter who wants to select the right candidates
- An executive team looking to understand what truly drives sales performance

... it all starts with the same realization:

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The human being behind the method is what makes the difference.

It's not the slickest pitch, the sharpest PowerPoint, or the boldest strategy that wins in the long run.

It's courage.

It's authenticity.

It's the willingness to act in alignment with your best self — even when fear whispers, *don't*.

When you begin taking steps in that direction, you won't just sell more. You'll feel stronger, freer, and more in control — at work, and in life.

And that is the true reward.

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## **Unlocking Your Sales Power – A Lifelong Journey**

Overcoming Sales Call Reluctance isn't a one-time project.

It's an ongoing process — one that deepens and evolves as you do.

New roles, new customers, new goals — each level of your career brings new challenges.

But with the tools, insights, and mindset you've built through this book, you now have a solid platform to stand on.

A platform that lets you say, every time a new fear appears:

"I've been here before.

I know how to move through this.

And I will."

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## Final Words



Thank you for walking this journey.  
Thank you for daring to reflect on what  
might be uncomfortable.  
Thank you for investing in yourself.

And most of all:  
Thank you for choosing to believe in  
what's possible.

Now it's your turn to take the next step.

Make the call.  
Send the proposal.  
Ask for the business.  
Build the relationship.  
Stay with the discomfort.  
Dare to be better than yesterday.

Unlock your sales power.  
Take responsibility for your life.  
And invest your energy in your goals —  
not your fears.

**The future is yours.**

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## Epilogue: Where Do You Invest Your Energy?

George W. Dudley, one of the pioneers of  
Sales Call Reluctance research, said it best:

*"What you invest your energy in becomes  
stronger. So how much are you investing in  
fear?"*

What we feed, grows.

If we fuel worry, hesitation, and excuses  
— they'll take over.  
If we fuel courage, action, and trust —  
they'll expand.

Every day, every conversation, every  
thought is a choice:

**Am I investing in fear — or in what I want  
to create?**

None of us are completely free of fear.  
That's not the goal.

The goal is to stop letting fear make our  
choices, run our careers, and dictate our  
lives.

Every time you choose to act despite the  
discomfort, you move the line of what  
you're capable of.

You build a courage muscle — one call,  
one meeting, one bold ask at a time.

It's not a small thing.

It's how you grow.

So next time you hesitate:  
Ask yourself what you're feeding.  
And choose consciously.

**Invest in courage.  
Invest in growth.  
Invest in your best self.  
Power up your sales — and power up  
your life.**

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## Glossary – Key Concepts in *Unlock Your Sales Power*

Term	Explanation
<b>Sales Call Reluctance</b>	A research-based term describing the psychological barriers that prevent salespeople from initiating contact with potential customers.
<b>Sales Inhibitor</b>	Internal, often hidden mental blocks that reduce motivation and sales activity, despite skill or knowledge.
<b>SPQ Gold/FSA</b>	A specialized psychometric test that measures sales call reluctance — not personality — and maps 16 distinct reluctance patterns.
<b>Telephobia</b>	Fear of calling or following up with customers by phone — one of the most common inhibitors.
<b>Yielder (Indecisiveness)</b>	Fear of appearing pushy, leading to excessive caution and missed opportunities.
<b>Social Differentiation</b>	Insecurity when contacting high-status individuals or decision-makers.
<b>Friend Protection</b>	Reluctance to sell to friends or acquaintances for fear of damaging the relationship.
<b>Doomsayer Thinking</b>	Catastrophic worry — always expecting the

Term	Explanation
<b>CBT (Cognitive Behavioral Therapy)</b>	worst possible outcome. A proven psychological approach used to challenge unhelpful thoughts and behaviors, often applied in exposure-based training.
<b>Exposure Training</b>	Gradual, step-by-step exposure to feared situations in order to reduce avoidance over time.
<b>Behavioral Activation</b>	Creating intentional routines and behaviors to break passivity and avoidant habits.
<b>Compensatory Behavior</b>	Actions like over-planning or endless prep work that replace riskier but necessary sales tasks.
<b>Pipeline</b>	A visual structure showing where different deals are in the sales process.
<b>Ramp-up Period</b>	The time it takes for a new hire to go from learning to performing productively.
<b>Accountability</b>	Taking personal responsibility for your goals, progress, and actions.
<b>Resilience</b>	The ability to recover from setbacks and continue forward with motivation and purpose.

# Unlock Your Sales Power

Do you know what you *should* be doing – but still don't do it?

Then this is the book for you.

Most sales books teach you technique. This one helps you overcome what's stopping you from using it.

*Unlock Your Sales Power* is based on over 40 years of research on Sales Call Reluctance — the mental and emotional barriers that quietly hold back salespeople's performance across the world.

In these pages, you won't just gain insight — you'll get practical tools, diagnostics, and CBT-inspired action plans to break through your inner blocks and unlock your full potential.

This book is for you if you:

- Want to sell more, but find yourself stuck in hesitation, procrastination, or self-doubt
- Coach, lead, or recruit salespeople and need tools that work
- Are responsible for growth and want to understand why so many sales programs fail — and what truly makes a difference
- Sit on an executive team and want to go beyond sales reports to uncover what really drives performance

*Unlock Your Sales Power* isn't another book about "working harder" or "smarter."

It's a practical, measurable, and proven method to build courage, action, and results — first in the individual, then across the entire sales organization.

It's time to let go of the fear or resistance that holds you back from making contact, stepping forward, or being seen.

**It's time to unlock your sales power.**

**If you want help using the test SPQ Gold/FSA to develop yourself, your sales organisation, in recruiting or accredit yourself in managing Sales Call Reluctance contact me at [christer@confidentapproach.com](mailto:christer@confidentapproach.com)**



**OBS! You can also read the book "Relentless" by Dudley and Bryant and "The Psychology of Sales Call Reluctance" by Dudley and Goodson. Both have the methods explained from Cognitive Behavior Training that we use and train people to use.**