

Are You a Quota Sloth? Take this Simple Test for Salespeople

Maybe you're the #1 salesperson in your organization. You always meet or surpass your quota. You make more money than 80% of your peers, because just like the old Pareto Principle says, you're in the 20% of superstars at your company. The others envy you and you know it. Secretly, it makes you chuckle as you drive out of the company parking lot in your luxury vehicle and see the others green with envy in your rearview mirror.

If that's you, this article isn't for you.

If you're in the envious 80% group, it is. Because if you're in the large group of salespeople who don't earn the kind of money the other guy is earning, there's a chance you are a...“quota sloth”. A quota sloth is the salesperson who makes their quota and then...rests. Moves slow. Stops prospecting. Doesn't follow through. Maybe it happens after you make a big sale and know you won't be hungry again for months. (Although perhaps that's better called a “quota boa constrictor”). Maybe you're the salesperson who does just enough to get by, manages to hang onto the job and make the minimum, but who never really seems to move up the leaderboard.

Do you want to? Really? If so, shuffle off to a quiet, private location and read on. This simple quiz will help you decide if you are a (ssshhh!) quota sloth... and what you can do right away so that next month, the rest of the team is envying *you*.

The Quota Sloth Quiz:

1. Do you close a big sale...and then sometimes “have to” go several months without another?
2. Do you skid into your quota in the 11th hour, moments before your sales manager was about to give you “the lecture”...again?
3. Have you found yourself breathing a sigh of relief upon closing a big sale...but then quickly feeling panic when you realize there's no big prospects in your pipeline?
4. Are you busy reassuring yourself that there are just “seasons” in your industry and you are helpless against the calendar?
5. Do you sometimes secretly feel like it's a grind to push, push, push all the time? Does it make you secretly just feel the need to slow down, take it easy, take a well-deserved break?
6. Do you get caught up in the minutiae of your job – sending thank you notes or organizing your presentation slides or making sure you have enough business cards just in case ---the “detail work” that doesn't actually directly bring in the money?
7. Are there times when you tell yourself, “I can coast for a while now”...and then put your role on auto-pilot?
8. Are you waiting for your company to provide you with leads? Are you waiting weeks for call-backs from prospects that never come? Are you certain that it is someone else's fault that you're not more successful?
9. Do you work less qualified deals, or those that may already be lost, because you have neglected building a pipeline of qualified prospects?

If you answered “Yes” to two or more of these questions, chances are high that you are a quota sloth! Do you want to do something about it? The antidote to *slothdom* is simple: discover the mathematics of the sales cycle. Also called, “The Law of Quotas”, this is the unique-to-you-and-your-industry numbers about what amount of effort it takes to create a consistently good result. The Law of Quotas states this: “What you put in x industry specific factors = results.” Imagine it as a funnel. There are many possible future customers at the top of the funnel – the beginning of the sales cycle. As you work the leads, the total number of possible buyers will naturally decrease because some aren’t qualified buyers, they’re not ready, they’re not serious, they don’t have money, etc.

A percentage of the leads who enter the top of the funnel will turn into sales. It’s different in every industry. Nobody closes 100%. So your role is to move prospects through the funnel efficiently, weeding out the ones who cannot be closed, and getting the greatest possible number to emerge as closed sales

Many salespeople concentrate their daily activities only on the end stages, mostly just working their best few opportunities because they can see the possibility of closing some of them and their sales manager is pushing for more sales this month. And you might be exceptional at closing, so you focus your energy there. But chances are, the company you work for isn’t able to provide enough leads to get you the lifestyle you want. That means you have to prospect more on your own, filling your own funnel, so that as the sales come out the bottom of the funnel, there are always more pending all the time, 12 months a year, year after year.

The quota sloth forgets that part. He or she waits for the customers to get themselves into the funnel and then works them. After a big sale, or at least meeting quota, the sloth just peers in to find that it’s empty or nearly so. Panic!

Since you can only close the prospects that are in your funnel, whether your sales cycle is 20 minutes or 2 years, the simplest and easiest way to increase your sales and exceed your quota is this: get more leads into the top of your sales funnel.

This is accomplished by deploying your own business development activities, whether it is soliciting referrals from customers, using LinkedIn.com or other social media to develop leads, a direct mail campaign or even the dreaded cold calling to targeted companies, whatever it takes. The salespeople you envy do this on a regular basis. They see this as just part of the job, and they are proactive about attracting people into their funnels 24/7.

Emerging from sales slothfulness to sales success is actually easy and can be started right now, today, with the resources you have in front of you and a willingness on your part to do what is necessary to be successful. Simply by brainstorming the ways that you can attract more prospects into your funnel and then by taking consistent, daily action, you can dramatically increase your commissions and heighten your job satisfaction. Use your telephone and your computer: they are your friends.

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