

Knowing the Numbers

We often hear great persuaders say, “It all comes down to numbers.” Of course, as a powerful persuader, you never forget what all those numbers represent: actual, living, breathing human beings with dreams, passions, hopes, fears, and concerns.

Why is an awareness of the numbers a critical part of your preparation? There are many reasons. How many people must you market to, then actually end up talking to, who will become customers? In the sales world, it is called your “conversion rate.” For example, let’s say your bottom line is that you’ve got to have sixty people become customers—your bare minimum. How many face-to-face encounters (or phone contacts, or whatever fits your situation) do you need to yield those sixty golden people? How, who, and where do you market? Is it via the Internet, cold calling, offering seminars or workshops, running classified ads, or television and/or radio commercials? Or for your niche, is it as simple as dropping fliers off at individual homes, sending e-mails, or better yet, using word of mouth? What is your system?

Knowing these numbers directly influences how and where you should focus your energies. It converts guesswork into concrete figures and systematizes what otherwise would be aimless effort. Knowing the numbers gives you a clear starting point, a clear ending point, and all the critical steps in between. Besides, knowing the numbers allows you to see your progress and improvement.

In baseball, the indicator of greatness is the batting average. In the world of sales, it’s the closing average.

—W. CLEMENT STONE

When it comes down to knowing the numbers, you will find that a poor persuader who knows their numbers will outpersuade an average but unprepared persuader every time. This is a classic example of preparation meeting opportunity. The business doesn't always go to the most deserving or the most brilliant. It goes to those who have steadily and consistently plugged along with their well-designed and well-implemented plans in hand. They have not only defined clear and specific objectives but they have translated them into action. This is the missing piece in many persuaders' preparations. We have all heard this advice, and we know it is perfectly sound and logical, but most of us rarely do anything about it.

Another way knowing the numbers is a critical part of your success is that it keeps motivation up during discouragement. Most people just give up too soon. Reality check: If discouraged persuaders simply understood the numbers, they would know that persistence in making those extra contacts would seal the deal. Various studies reveal these numbers; although they differ in their specific findings (they were asking slightly different questions of different groups of respondents), the trend is incontrovertible:

- 40 percent of persuaders admit to making no new (weekly) contacts.
- 48 percent give up after only one contact.
- Of those who attempt a second contact, 73 percent will then give up.
- 85 percent give up after the third contact.
- 90 percent give up after the fourth contact.
- The 10 percent of people who persist beyond the fourth contact end up with 80 percent of the business!

Let's repeat that last finding: 10 percent of the people who persist beyond the fourth contact end up with 80 percent of the business. Keep at it!