

# SELLING

DECEMBER

THE FRONT LINES OF BUSINESS

2002

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Start off on the right foot. See our experts' articles about New Year's Eve networking and making resolutions on pages 10 and 11.

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But you must know how to sell them. Find out everything you need to know on page 3.

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## Leadership principles for today's tough, challenging times

### Stay out of range of friendly fire

By Chris Widener

Every sales organization — and every human organization for that matter — goes through challenging times. We must accept the fact that tough times will come, but at the same time, know that by exhibiting leadership during those times, the group can come out of them stronger than ever.

In reality, it doesn't matter what is going on around us. What matters is the attitude we keep, the skills we exhibit, and the kinds of people we surround ourselves with during those tough times.

### How to exhibit leadership when sales are down

1. Keep your eye on the big picture. When sales drop, everybody's temptation is to be-



Chris Widener

come acutely focused on the problem. This is the natural response. Real leaders, however, keep their eyes on the big picture. This

doesn't mean that we don't address problems. We must deal with them. But real leaders don't get caught up in the muck and mire of the problem, ultimately dying there and taking their organizations with them. Real leaders see the big picture and keep moving toward the vision and the overall sales goal. The further they take their followers toward that vision, the further away from the problem they get.

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### Vagabond selling: A long, winding road

Patrick Snow's sales career has had as many twists and turns as a gnarly country road you'd find near his childhood town of Owosso, Mich. In 12 years, he's worked for seven different companies in four different industries. Whatever the industry — whether corporate travel or high-tech — he's always been in the top 5 percent in terms of sales. He typifies today's traveling salesman — going from job to job, realizing that uncertainty is the only certainty in selling. That's why he's the SELL!NG™ All-Star for December. See page 15.



## SELLING™ ALL-STAR

# He's traveled a long, winding road

By Jenny McCune

Patrick Snow's sales career has had as many twists and turns as a gnarly country road you'd find near his childhood town of Owosso, Mich. In 12 years, he's worked for seven different companies in four different industries. He typifies today's traveling salesman — going from job to job, realizing that uncertainty is the only certainty in selling.

Today, he works for TTM Technologies, a printed circuit board manufacturer based in Redmond, Wash. These boards end up in devices ranging from garage door openers to cell phones to computer printers. "Anything that has electrical current going through it probably uses a circuit board," Snow says.

He's been in love with selling since he sold the *Detroit Free Press* in the sixth grade and made a whopping \$60 on collection nights, a fortune in the eyes of a 12-year-old.

"After I made so much money, I knew that sales was my calling," Snow says. "What I like about sales is two-fold: You are your own boss, and there is no limit on the amount of money that you can make."

Snow also enjoys the freedom of working from his home on Bainbridge Island, across Puget Sound from Seattle. Since his territory is the state of Washington and Western Canada, 90 percent of his clients are within a 45-minute drive of his home, and that gives him time to spend with his children.

Whatever industry he's been involved in, Snow says he's always been in the top 5 percent in terms of sales. He attributes his success to his ability to cultivate clients.



Patrick Snow

"My goal is to learn as much as I can about individuals, and show them how much I care about their success," he says. "The more they like me, the more likely they will buy from me."

For example, he'll see a family photo on the desk and note that he has "two boys just like you do." Snow stresses that his approach only works if the feelings are genuine.

Snow also takes the time to get to know his customer's business.

His ability to build relationships is crucial in his industry. It has a long sales cycle — anywhere from one to two years — which makes it imperative that he build a relationship on trust so he can work closely with customers.

He recommends that sales professionals use a database program or a contact manager like ACT to keep pertinent information on contacts and clients (names, addresses, phone numbers, notes on likes and dislikes, and other pertinent sales information).

Snow's industry faces stiff competition from offshore companies that can provide printed circuit boards far less expensively than TTM. As a result, Snow and his employer have had to rethink their selling and marketing strategies. Snow can't win on price, but he can stress to customers his product's superior craftsmanship, and the convenience of manufacture in the United States.

Several years ago, Snow decided to branch out into coaching and professional speaking. He started his own company, The Snow Group. Earlier this year, he published his first book, *Creating Your Own Destiny: How to Get Exactly What You Want Out of Life*. ■

## Patrick Snow

Account Manager

TTM Technologies

Redmond, Wash.

Years in position: Just over one.

**Previous Experience:** Seven years in the printed circuit board industry. Prior to that, he worked in sales for Airborne Express, Avis and a travel agency that focused on business clients.

**Secret of his success:** "I get to know customers. I ask them open-ended questions: 'Tell me about your business, What are your printed circuit board needs? Where do you live? Do you have children?'"

**What motivates him:** "My wife and two boys."

**Best advice:** "Don't take rejection personally. People are not saying 'no' to you as a person, it's simply that the product or service you represent is something they can't use."

**What drives him crazy:** "Too many reports. When I worked at Avis, I'd spend six hours a week filling out reports."

**Secret Weapon:** Get the prospects away from work. Take them to lunch. "I only do this after I have a relationship with them, not after the first or second time that I meet them...It gets them to open up." ■