

Keep Your Eye on the Ball

By Bill Sparkman, The Coach

Congratulations! If you are reading this article, you have made it through the first month of this year. The year, that just 4 or 5 weeks ago, was going to be your “Best Year Ever”. Now that the excitement and optimism that each new year brings has worn off, how are you progressing? Are you on track to producing results like never before? The excitement only lasts so long before reality begins to set in. The reality of validation from your actions this last month that begins to convince you that “Oh my God, I think I can really get over the top this year”, or the reality of “Oh my God, here I go again, one step forward and 2 steps back”.

As your coach, I am calling a “time out” to ask you some questions and offer some critical areas that you must re-focus on to keep the momentum going and re-light the flame of enthusiasm and hope for what is truly possible this year.

I don’t want you to become complacent about the promises you made to yourself. Progress and potential are attacked every day by a silent killer – complacency. It will poison your best intention. It will take the life out of your best laid plans. It is very easy to find yourself back in the same ruts that you were in last year. These ruts, at least the negative ones, are what I call “The Habits of Failure”.

One way that you will know that you are “Keeping Your Eye on the Ball” is using this system of constant refocusing. Here are the most critical areas for you to re-focus on this month, to keep yourself on course.

Area One – The Plan

This is a good time to be certain that what you wrote down as your goals and your action plan for 2005 is really what you wanted. Be sure it wasn’t something that just sounded good at the time to you, your boss or your spouse. Are you still passionate about your goals? Passionate salespeople do things that move them closer to achieving their goals happen every day. If you have set high personal and business goals, you won’t have the luxury of letting up. Goals are only your best focus tools if they are written down. And they must be so high that they stretch you until you feel a bit nervous or uncomfortable. Of course I am assuming that you have gotten your goal planning done by now. If not, STOP PLANNING. It’s time to get busy.

Area Two – Review

Take time to evaluate and review the results you are getting for your investment of time, energy and efforts. The term ROI, or Return on Investment, applies here. Don’t get trapped into doing things that are not producing positive results for you. Be clear. What’s working? What’s not working? What are you learning or relearning about yourself or your commitment? You aren’t slipping back into those unproductive habits or behaviors that you know are a dead end, are you? If so, why? Positive income producing habits are the key to consistency and

predictable income. Take a minute to review your daily routine. Is it rigorous enough to get you what you want?

Area Three – Adjustments

What gets revealed to you in the 2nd step of reviewing will tell you where you need to make adjustments, if you are honest with yourself. If you can't be honest with yourself, get a coach! I have trained and coached salespeople long enough to know the areas of your business that may need adjustment.

- A) **Prospecting.** Are you doing the right thing? (ie. Matching your strengths and personality style to your prospecting? Are you putting in a full time effort? Do you promote yourself to new people every day? Are you working with more prospects and less suspects?
- B) **Better presentations.** Are you creating a memorable experience for your customer? Are you giving your customer a compelling reason to choose you?
- C) **Selling.** Are you doing more telling or more selling? Its time to close more sales. Ask for the order, and keep asking.
- D) **Persistence.** Following up can eliminate 40% of your competition. Make more un-reasonable requests and don't give up. Stop being so casual about losing.

Make changes in your actions. Once you discover the changes you need to make, make the adjustments quickly. Don't wait until the 2 minute warning to figure out what you want. When you will no longer tolerate not having what you want in your life, you will become more persistent in its pursuit.

Area Four – Gratitude

Don't forget to contribute along the way. Be thankful for the opportunity that you have every day and give back. Your life and your business is unimportant, except for the impact it has on others. Success without fulfillment is meaningless.

All right, enough now. Get back out there and play the game. Start risking more in the next 30 days. Be willing to fail more. Your lack of failure often dictates a lack of effort or a personal policy of playing it safe. Stop playing it safe and stop settling for less. Keep Your Eye on the Ball and Keep Winning!

Bill Sparkman, "The Coach" is a mortgage industry sales trainer, speaker, and coach. For more information about Bill and his products or to find the date and location of Bill's next seminar, please visit his website www.billsparkmanthecoach.com. To book Bill for your next event, call Heather Greenemeier at 619-429-4055.