

42TM Rules

*to Increase Sales
Effectiveness*

MICHAEL GRIEGO

Foreword by MARK LESLIE
Founder/CEO of Veritas Software



**“42 Rules to
Increase Sales
Effectiveness”
Book Excerpt**

By Michael Griego

Foreword by Mark Leslie,
Founder/CEO of Veritas Software

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WHITE PAPER Table of Contents (included here)

- Foreword by Mark Leslie
- Introduction
- Rule 1: Rules Are Meant To Be Broken
- Rule 2: It's Not About You
- Rule 7: Know How Your Customer Buys
- Afterword: Now Put it All Together
- About the Author
- Getting the book from Super Star Press

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C o n t e n t s

NOTE: This is the Table of Contents (TOC) from the book for your reference. The eBook TOC (below) differs in page count from the tradebook TOC.

Foreword	Foreword by Mark Leslie	1
Intro	3
Part I	The Effective Sales Perspective	6
Rule 1	Rules Are Meant To Be Broken.	8
Rule 2	It's Not About You	10
Rule 3	It's Not About Your Product	12
Rule 4	It's All About Your Customer	14
Rule 5	It's Also All About Revenue	16
Part II	The Effective Sales Process	18
Rule 6	Target Your Customer	20
Rule 7	Know How Your Customer Buys	22
Rule 8	Know How Your Customer Makes Decisions	24
Rule 9	Develop Your Customer's Buying Milestones.	26
Rule 10	Develop Your Optimized Sales Process	28
Rule 11	Create a Playbook	30

Part III	The Effective Salesperson	32
Rule 12	Be a Superstar	34
Rule 13	Have a PAR Time	36
Rule 14	Make a 10-5-2-Do List	38
Rule 15	Measure Activity Metrics	40
Rule 16	Develop Your Success Formula	42
Rule 17	Keep Score with a Scorecard	44
Rule 18	Reading Makes Perfect	46
Part IV	Effective Territory Management	48
Rule 19	Prioritize Your Accounts and Opportunities	50
Rule 20	Develop a Territory Attack Plan	52
Rule 21	Develop a 360° Account Snapshot	54
Rule 22	Upgrade Your Account Management	56
Rule 23	Manage Your Channels	58
Rule 24	Master Your 30-60-90 Day Forecast	60
Part V	Effective Sales Communication	62
Rule 25	Elevate Your Sales Pitch	64
Rule 26	Develop a 20 to 40 Second Speech	66
Rule 27	Live to Sell Another Day	68
Rule 28	Manage Your Sales Email	70
Rule 29	Get Them to Call Back	72
Rule 30	Share a Great Testimonial	74

Part VI	The Effective Sales Meeting.	76
Rule 31	Prepare the Call Box	78
Rule 32	Become a Probe Master.	80
Rule 33	Qualify, Qualify, Qualify.	82
Rule 34	Make a Player Chart	84
Rule 35	Develop an Executive Whiteboard	86
Rule 36	Present Your Solution	88
Part VII	The Effective Close.	90
Rule 37	Become a Close Master.	92
Rule 38	Map a Problem Chart	94
Rule 39	Use a Customer Decision Plan	96
Rule 40	Propose Like a Pro.	98
Rule 41	Negotiate to Close	100
Rule 42	These are My Rules. What are Yours? . . .	102
Appendix A	Diagrams.	104
Author	About the Author.	106
Your Rules	Write Your Own Rules	108
Books	Other Happy About Books	110

Foreword by Mark Leslie

I got my first sales experience selling shoes in a mall many years ago. I never forgot the fundamentals that went into the various aspects of a fairly simple sales process: engaging suspects and prospects (standing at the front door of the shoe store), qualifying (escorting them to "my" set of seats), questioning (size and style, offering alternatives if out of stock), demonstrating ("Try them on, and walk around. They look good—how do they feel?"), closing ("Do you want to wear them out, or should we wrap them?"). Over the years, in more complex technology environments, I added experiences in hiring and managing salespeople and building organizations that were high-performance selling machines. The fundamentals never changed at the field level, only got more complex. However, the sustaining of sales quality, efficiency and effectiveness across the entire organization became the greater challenge in achieving revenue goals and company success. Indeed, sales effectiveness at the micro and macro level has been the elusive target for many companies in which I have built, managed, advised and invested.

I first met Mike Griego in 2005 in a Palo Alto café. Having retired as CEO and Chairman of the Board at Veritas, I was teaching courses on Entrepreneurship and Sales Organization at Stanford University's Graduate School of Business. Mike, as president/founder of a MXL Partners, a Silicon Valley sales process consulting and training firm, and Stanford MBA alumni himself, had contacted me and requested a meeting to simply meet and compare notes. We had a delightful first meeting and discussed a draft article I was writing on "The Sales Learning

Curve" which was published in the 'Harvard Business Review' in the summer issue of 2006. Mike agreed to review it for me and confirm its conclusions. It was refreshing to discuss the complexities of structuring and managing the modern enterprise sales organization with someone so well versed in all aspects of the world of sales. Mike was as comfortable and experienced in the current trenches of the Silicon Valley field sales environments as he was in the executive management and board rooms of very sophisticated organizations and the sales challenges that faced them.

While the world doesn't necessarily need another sales book, it does need a modern, fresh look at the tools, concepts and principles of sales effectiveness at all levels of an organization in today's marketplace. Mike's new book, '42 Rules to Increase Sales Effectiveness,' is a powerful and quick read for all parties involved in driving sales revenue, from the executive team to the sales and marketing organization. He has well captured the keys to increasing sales effectiveness with a crisp, practical and highly readable book.

I wish this book was available when I started my career. It would no doubt have improved my selling prowess, but also would have developed and guided me as an engineering-oriented executive in validating my intuitive hunches and managing and overseeing the sales side of organizations. I heartily recommend you pull up a chair, grab a cup of coffee, read this book and be ready to re-confirm and even re-think your views of sales and sales effectiveness.

Mark Leslie

Mark Leslie is the Founder of Veritas Software (now Symantec) and served as CEO and Chairman of the Board. During his tenure he grew annual revenues from \$95,000 to \$1.5 billion. He is currently the managing director of Leslie Ventures, a private investment firm. He is also a lecturer at Stanford's Graduate School of Business where he teaches courses in Entrepreneurship and Sales Organization.

Who Should Read This?

If you are a professional salesperson, sales manager or director, VP of Sales, CEO, any role in Marketing, or anyone supporting selling efforts, this book is for you. If you are a senior executive, consultant, venture capitalist, board member, entrepreneur or aspiring up-and-comer, you should know the updated tools, language and tactics of selling in today's market.

As a professional sales consultant and trainer to Fortune 500 firms and leading Silicon Valley technology firms, I have reduced the keys to sales effectiveness to 42 rules. These rules have been road tested over 28 years of personal sales and management experience and close observation of many salespeople and sales organizations. These rules apply to all selling efforts, from high-tech enterprise sales to non-technology sales.

Why Should You Read This?

Sales isn't rocket science, but it's not ABC simple either. While selling is often either over-engineered or over-simplified, today even the professionals are caught off-guard in a changing world and marketplace. "Old school" is out; new school is in, but with a twist. There are key sales fundamentals that never go out of style but still need a refresh. This book, '42 Rules to Increase Sales Effectiveness,' upgrades and adjusts foundational rules for today's business environment to increase the overall sales effectiveness of individuals or teams.

In '42 Rules to Increase Sales Effectiveness,' you will learn:

- **The Effective Sales Perspective** - 5 rules that will realign your thinking about the role of a salesperson to the customer, product and company.
- **The Effective Sales Process** - 6 rules that will clarify and present the correct way to build a selling process from your customer's buying process, your corresponding sales process and tactical sales playbooks.
- **The Effective Salesperson** - 7 rules that lay out the blueprint for the successful and effective salesperson from their attributes, habits, metrics, formulas, scorecards and even reading lists.
- **Effective Territory Management** - 6 rules that provide guidance for salespeople and anyone managing salespeople to prioritize and strategically approach and manage territories, channels and forecasts.
- **Effective Sales Communication** - 6 rules applied to various levels of your sales communications, from phone and email actions to practical best practices in structuring elevator pitches, sales messages and talking points.
- **The Effective Sales Meeting** - 6 rules that break down the requirements for your perfect and optimal customer sales call, from power preparation, probing and questioning, to qualification and executive white-boarding.
- **Effective Sales Closing** - 6 rules that get to the heart of effectively bringing your deals to closure, with sales cycle tactics and professional deal management that stands out from discovery to proposal to negotiations.

This book will challenge standard conventions while reinforcing best practices that have gotten lost in the recent advancement of new technologies and modern tools. It's a great read for any professional to confirm that their own "salesmanship" is still on target and appropriately current. Use this as your own handbook to reset on key best-practices for the new day or teach a new generation 42 nuggets and practical applications of this fascinating activity called Sales.

1

Rules Are Meant To Be Broken

Use rules with your own applied wisdom and discretion.

Let's be realistic. This book presents rules that really do increase sales effectiveness when applied. These rules are solid and proven over the years in numerous organizations including IBM, Sun Microsystems, Infosys, Gartner Group and many other leading technology firms in Silicon Valley. But just as I allow for reasonable flexibility in managing sales organizations (no need to be as ruthless as Alex Baldwin in the movie 'Glengarry Glen Ross') so it is with these rules. Use them with your own applied wisdom and discretion.

I wish I had this book at the beginning of my sales career. In essence I almost did, as I was trained well at The Southwestern Company and IBM Corporation. Nevertheless the conciseness of it all would have been helpful. Likewise, I wish I had this book at the time I first became a sales manager and before my first assignment as a VP of Sales. Many pieces would have fallen together in place sooner without trial and error or without having to cobble together learnings from several mentors, books, and raw experiences. Indeed some of these rules would have made some points in my life simpler and certainly increased sales effectiveness.

Some of these rules will absolutely resonate with you, while others may not. Don't fight that. I honestly believe that the majority will provide you fodder to work with and initiate required readjustment to your own thinking, process, tactics and strategies. In any event, run with what works for you and disregard what does not. After all, in most cases, rules are meant to be broken.

2

It's Not About You

There's nothing like a highly effective and productive salesperson with a heart and sensitivity to others.

We spend much of our life focused on our personal needs, wants and desires. From childhood dreams to target goals in academics, sports and personal relationships, we pretty much spend a large chunk of time thinking about ourselves operating in the world around us. It's natural to carry this self absorption over to our professional lives. Of course, we think, we must focus on ourselves to consciously and effectively "get the job done."

In the Sales world, this pre-occupation with our own concerns can impede our selling efforts. There are potentially three areas where selfish thinking can get in the way of your being at your best. Think about it.

Me vs. my Product - Self-focused thinking plays out in how we consider our product or solution in the marketplace. If I care only about hitting my numbers, enlarging my territory or boosting my personal earnings than about bringing value to customers, I risk coming across as callous and cold to customers and partners and even others inside my company. We've all seen the sales rep who steamrolls the marketing team or support team or speaks of his customers with disdain. There's a fine line between caring for our customers and looking out for ourselves. Learn to see and believe the benefits your product solution brings to customers with you as the conduit. This big picture view brings a healthy perspective to your daily sales effort.

Me vs. my Sales Pitch - Selfish thinking plays out literally in how we approach our prospect or customer on the phone, email or face-to-face. If I really don't consider the person on the other side as a human being with their own wants and needs, I risk a distancing or disconnection in my communications. I may be repeating a script or common sales pitch, but I must recognize that I'm ultimately dealing with a real person with issues, dreams and desires of their own mixed up with a potential need for my products or services (see Rule 4). Approach your pitch with deft caution and a heart.

Me vs. my Customer - Once past the initial approach and now into the sales call or meeting, self-centeredness can also play out in how we personally engage with our customers and prospects throughout the sales call. If I am too self-focused in a customer meeting, I risk spending too much of that meeting on my own concerns; namely, my product offerings rather than my prospect or customer (see Rule 3). As we will find, the customers often cares not a whit about you. The vibe of a self-serving salesperson becomes very clear to a prospect.

When one approaches sales with a healthy and balanced sense of self and care for others, then this rule that "it's not about you" is easy to swallow. Indeed, an effective salesperson carries him or her self with strength, confidence and competence. But there's nothing like a highly effective and productive salesperson with a heart and sensitivity to others. It stands out and customers appreciate it. Even if they can't put their finger on it.

A balanced salesperson (see Rule 12) with an understanding that it's not only about him or herself will have a healthy sense of self relative to their product offerings, selling approach and customer interaction. Combine this perspective with some of the effectiveness tools and rules in this book and you have a winning combination that produces benefit for all parties.

Are you selfish in your sales efforts?

7

Know How Your Customer Buys

Whether they're aware of it or not, all buyers go through a buying process.

Salespeople need to understand how their customers buy. Specifically, how do they actually purchase the products you sell? Our customers are always making decisions about products and services via a tangible buying process. In fact, businesses and consumers go through a defined or non-defined buying process. Whether we're aware of it or not, all buyers go through a natural progression toward an end purchase. If we understand that particular buying process then we can more effectively sell to it.

Several years ago some friends referred me to Palo Alto Metro Sports for new running shoes to fix my pronation problem (caused by my ankles rolling out when I jog). When I walked into the store the salesman approached me and asked me if he could help. I described my problem and he proceeded to clarify and explain to me what pronation was and showed me two columns of shoes on the wall that addressed advanced cushioning and stability. At the same time he asked me questions about how often I run, what kind of surface I ran on, how far I ran, in a sense qualifying me while asking me also the price range I was looking at, certain brands, etc. He then said, "I'll go in the back and find two or three pairs of shoes that fit the type of shoes you're looking for. You can try them on, go outside, run up and down the runway. They'll be in your price band. You can then figure out which pair works best for you and we'll get you out of here in a few minutes. How does that sound to you?" Well, it

sounded great. What he was doing was stepping me through a shoe buying process, and essentially taking me through his matching sales cycle. At any point I could have said, "Whoa, I'm really just looking—I'd like to check over at the Stanford Shopping Center." But I said, "Bring me out some shoes and I'll give 'em a try." I purchased a pair and have since purchased my last 10 pairs of running shoes from Palo Alto Metro Sports.

Now that's purchasing at a consumer level. Most of us, whether we're buying refrigerators, other household items, cars, etc., go through a process and, if forced to, can specify the various steps of that process. This process can be documented and applied to any business purchase as well.

In the following chart you can see that there is a **Customer Buying Process** that shows a progression through different stages. Terminology can vary whether it's a consumer or business sale. First there is an initial Interest or Awareness stage followed by an Education or Information Gathering stage where information is gathered, compared and explored. Next is an Evaluation or Demonstration stage where one takes it out for a spin drive or "tries it on for size." Then comes a Justification or Confirmation stage where people conduct some type of financial justification and finally a Decision or Purchase stage where the customer makes a buying decision.

As mentioned, this often goes on without people even knowing consciously that this is happening. Good selling maps a selling process (Rule 10) to an understood buying process. If we know where the customer is going, we can map a process to it and take them along while we manage the sales cycle. Just as the good shoe salesman proactively stepped me through the process, so good salespeople know where their customers are going, how their buyers buy and move them along appropriately. This works for a very simple sale like selling shoes as well as the more sophisticated multi-million dollar complex sales efforts, as we shall soon see. Those who understand this will be way ahead of the curve.

Do you know how your customer buys?

The Customer Buying Process



Figure 1: The Customer Buying Process

Now Put it All Together

There is less than five minutes left in the 4th quarter of a high school championship football game. The score is tied 7-7. The All-American tailback catches the punt at the 50-yard line and returns the ball to the 5-yard line. On first-and-goal the quarterback in the huddle calls for a "Pop Right"—a play in which he takes the snap from center, turns to the right and hands the ball off to the team's All League fullback who dives into the gap between the right guard and right tackle. The play is stopped cold for no gain. On second-down the quarterback calls the same play. This time the fullback runs to the three-yard line.

It's now third-and-goal. With the clock running, the quarterback calls for a "Pop Left"—the same identical play except to the left side of the line. As they approach the line of scrimmage, the left guard glances at the left tackle and they both nod their heads, as if to signal "it's now our turn." As the left guard gets into his 3-point stance he recalls all the blocking fundamentals that have been ingrained into his head by his coaches for many hours over years of practice. Stay low, explode into your man, drive the legs, dig, dig, dig, don't stop until the whistle blows....

When I think about it, I can still smell the grass as I lay face down in it, my chest across the goal line, that All-League fullback lying over my shoulder holding the ball. I was the left guard. We scored the touchdown. We won the game. We won the championship.

Like all those football blocking fundamentals, this book has included tools, concepts and fundamentals for effective selling and sales management. It's really on you, the reader, to pull this all together as appropriate and apply it to the big tasks in front of you. In many cases, much is at stake, even more than high school championship games. The clear memory I had was the flashing across my mind, at the exact moment of truth, all that I had learned and practiced to make me effective at that needed time. May it be so for you as well and all that is in this book. That you step up to the occasion and implement all tools and fundamentals necessary for you to be at your best, to sell and execute effectively and successfully in your own high stakes game. I'll be cheering for you.

About the Author



Michael Griego is president of **MXL Partners**, a sales consulting firm providing organizational sales training and strategic sales management and coaching services.

Michael conducts executive, sales and sales management consulting and training services for companies around the world. He brings over 28 years of practical high-technology sales and sales management experience to his clients. He has held sales and executive management positions with IBM Corporation, XL-Datacomp/StorageTek, Dataquest/Gartner Group, Zona Research/Intelliquest, Active Decisions and Workshare.

Michael has conducted sales training and consulting services for a wide range of companies from Fortune 500 firms to early-stage start-ups in Silicon Valley. He's a popular corporate and CEO summit keynote speaker and guest lecturer at leading business schools including Stanford's Graduate School of Business. Michael has a BA from Occidental College and an MBA from Stanford University. He has been married to his wife, Debbie, for 30 years. They have three children and reside in Mountain View, California.

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