



How to Become a Winning Sales ACE And Avoid Getting Shot Down!

By Lt. Col. Rob "Waldo" Waldman

If you want to test the true character of a person, see how they respond to adversity. Watch how they handle the pressure of a lost sale, an angry client or a difficult boss. What do they say? How do they act? What is their emotional state? Do they freeze up and get angry, or do they buckle down and increase their focus and commitment?

The same holds true for those who would assume the mantle of leadership in business. When adversity hits, how they respond in the market will determine their ability to stay in business and win. Leadership — both on a personal and organizational level — ultimately drives the actions taken amidst crisis and change.

Today's economy is full of adversity. I call them "missiles of business and life." It seems we are being fired at every day. Rising costs of fuel, shrinking budgets, demanding clients and a lack of qualified (and loyal) employees all create an intense and constantly changing environment. As soon as we think we defeated one missile ... BAM! Another one is fired. As soon as profits start coming in ... BAM, another competitor enters the fight.

The missiles will come and you will be fired upon. It's not a matter of if, but when and how often. The key is NOT to get shot down!

This week we saw one of the most reputable giants in the financial industry — Lehman Brothers — get shot down. Just a few years ago, who would have thought such a thing could happen? But it did. And it will happen again. It's just the nature of business ... and life.

In fighter combat, the best pilots who

are able to adapt to adversity and change are called ACEs. They prepare relentlessly and are the most focused and committed under pressure. They are the respected and accomplished leaders in their squadrons because they don't run away when fear knocks on their door. They buckle down and ultimately take action.

The right action.

Here are a few wingtips that can turn you into an ACE and help you avoid getting shot down on your next mission:

A: Attitude + Action. Attitude does not determine altitude. Attitude plus action does. Being positive and enthusiastic is a critical component of success, but **your customer ultimately rewards your actions, not your positive attitude!** An attitude that breeds confidence is a byproduct of disciplined preparation and mission rehearsal. When dealing with a price objection, last-minute competitor or late product shipment, it's the commitment, focus and sense of urgency you have to fix the problem, provide value and deliver results that counts.

C: Customer. Success in business is not about you, your company or your product. It's about your customer. Prior to each meeting, gather the latest, up-to-date intelligence (from multiple sources) and commit yourself to meeting the needs of your customer. Be original. Come prepared with questions. Learn about the person you're meeting. If you're not focused 100% on your customer — your target — you shouldn't strap on your jet to fly (by the way, it can't hurt to learn about your **competition** too ... but only *after* learning about your customer).

E: Environment. Every mission is unique. What works with one client or industry may not work with another. The environment in which you and your customer operate will ultimately determine your tactics. Was there a recent merger or perhaps some layoffs at the company you're meeting? How's their stock price? What's the nature of the industry you're operating in? Who are you meeting? Who is the decision maker? What resources (wingmen) do you have that can help you prepare for your meeting? **Never sell by the seat of your pants!**

Take it from somebody who's been shot at in real combat, the winning ACEs in business and life **prepare for the worst, but then expect the best.** They acknowledge adversity and develop the confidence to overcome it by hard work and focus. But being an ACE is not easy. You can either "push it up" on your throttle and defeat the missile, or pull it back and risk getting shot down. It's your choice.

I hope you'll push it up!

Waldo Waldman builds team unity within organizations as a high-energy leadership and inspirational speaker. A former combat-decorated fighter pilot with corporate sales experience, Waldo brings an exciting and valuable message to organizations by using fighter pilot strategies as building blocks for peak performance, teamwork, leadership and trust. His clients include Aflac, Hewlett-Packard, John Hancock, Nokia, Bank of America, NY Life and Home Depot. To download Waldo's Top Gun Motivation mission briefing, visit www.YourWingman.com, e-mail him at Waldo@YourWingman.com or call 1-866-925-3616. ■