

# Everyone Wants To Be A Champion

By Tony Dupaquier



While working with dealerships and presenting workshops across the country, I am often asked, “What does it take to become a superstar business manager?” The answer is simple: acquire new skills and practice.

Steven Covey wrote a book many of us have read - or should read - called *The*

*7 Habits of Highly Successful People*. A sales manager gave me the book awhile back, and, to this day, I continue to reference it. One of the habits Covey writes of is the importance of continuing education. The analogy he uses for this is “sharpening the saw.” Covey illustrates the point with the idea that taking the extra time to sharpen a saw allows a lumberjack to cut more trees. Although a tempting idea, I do not actually endorse using sharp axes and saws in the business office to conduct business, as much as that may disappoint some of you. What I do endorse is that business managers spend time sharpening their skills in the business office. The end result is that the business office will be more productive and profitable.

When a business manager becomes content with current penetrations and income levels, he/she may be replaced with a more proactive person. If a business manager is not happy with his/her current level of production, it is time to do something about it—sharpen the skills now!

Where can a business manager sharpen his/her skills? In a training class. It is time to learn some new skills, and chances are, business managers will not learn many of them sitting at a desk. That desk is one of the reasons it is

difficult to learn anything new. It is the same desk he/she has been going to for years, and, when a customer walks into the office, he/she just follows the same old routine. Get out from behind that desk. Take a few days away from the dealership and go learn some new ways to sell more products and make more money.

It is unfortunate that the dealership environment discourages employees from taking off any time. However, business managers must make the time, and the dealer should insist on business managers doing so. I guarantee one thing—business managers will make more money in the long run attending an F&I school or seminar for a few days rather than staying at the dealership and continuing to use the same presentation methods.

How much time is needed? That depends on the situation. If F&I training has not been attended in the past three years, look into a full F&I class. These classes last about five days, and not only will they give a new outlook on the business manager’s position, they will also give the skills needed to work with today’s customers. A class should also give additional product knowledge and possibly show a newer process that can shorten time with each customer.

If the business manager has attended F&I training in the past three years, he/she should look into an advanced F&I class to brush up on current issues and to learn new solutions for new and old objections.

If the business manager is still using the old-fashioned step sell or waiver-closing method, he/she should look into a menu selling class, if not a full F&I class.

What is there to learn? A lot. I recently had a student tell me he was opposed to attending a training session. After 13 years of doing F&I, what could he possibly learn?



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The man was absolutely shocked at what he learned. Not only did he discover a new process that took half the time to complete, he also learned how to be a more complete business manager and increase his income—legally.

The automotive industry has more educated customers today. These customers are learning how to deal with the sales department and what to say to the business manager. Customers are continually educating themselves. Has the dealership updated with these customers, or are the customers more prepared for the dealership than the dealership is for them?

Moreover, sharpening skills may actually save business managers from breaking the law. What we must do in the business office to be legally compliant is constantly changing. Many of the tools we were given in the past are now deemed illegal. With today's growing legal threat toward the automotive industry, it would be in the business manager's best interest to know what is right and what is wrong. Just because business has been conducted in a certain way in the past and that is the way the dealership

has always done it, does not mean it is legal. In most cases, it proves to be just the opposite.

One more thing to consider about attending training... What happens when a group of like-minded individuals who work in the same position are in a room at the same time? Chaos? No, a fun time! Training can actually be an enjoyable experience. This meeting of minds also allows business managers to share ideas with people from other stores and find out that the problems in one store are the same everywhere else.

Business managers, take a vested interest in yourself and go learn some new and better ways to sharpen your talents. The break will do you good, and the new skills acquired will pay not only you but also the dealership more money.

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