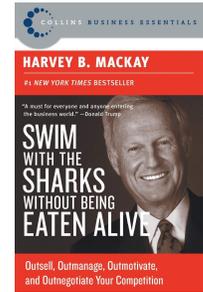


Swim With the Sharks

Harvey Mackay (1988)

Notes by Bob Evely
Wilmore, Kentucky; 2009.



This is a timeless classic! I have referred to it countless times throughout my career, having read it shortly after it was published in 1988. I found the “Mackay 66” concept especially powerful. Following are my short excerpts and notes, but I would highly recommend buying a copy of this book, reading it, and keeping it handy as a reference.

Getting re-orders is what counts

Anyone can get the order if he’s willing to stretch the truth far enough. But you don’t come out a winner just by getting that first big order. The mark of a pro is getting the reorder.

Let the buyer convince himself

To supply something, you must first create a demand. Marketing is not the art of selling. It’s not the simple business of convincing someone to buy. It is the art of **creating conditions** by which the buyer convinces himself. And nothing is more convincing than hard evidence that others want the same thing.

There are **objections** to every proposition, no matter how attractive. Good salespeople **set up situations** where the customer sells himself, regardless of the objections.

Connecting using special interests

When you know your customers, and some of their special interests or characteristics, you always have a basis for contacting and talking with them. I have a customer who’s a devoted Chicago Cubs fan. That’s usually good for at least a dozen condolence messages a year. I have another customer who’s a stamp collector. No matter where I go, all over the world, I send him unusual and exotic stamps. I think he must like that. He’s been a customer for twenty years, and in all that time I’ve met him only once.

Neutralizing suspicion and cynicism

Remember the truth about buyers: They come pre-wired to regard your proposition with suspicion and cynicism. That’s their job. It’s your job as a salesperson to neutralize these feelings so your product can get the fair hearing it deserves. If selling were just a matter of determining who’s got the low bid, then the world would not need salespeople. It could all be done by computer. The “Mackay 66” is designed to convert you from an adversary to a colleague of the people you’re dealing with, and to help you make sales.

The “Mackay 66” form

Yes, what we’re talking about here is filling out a form. It does not come as news to me that people don’t like to fill out forms, or that salespeople are worse than most in that way. Salespeople are big picture types; refugees from mathematics; operating strictly from the right/creative side of the brain. I accept that. This form is designed with those attitudes in mind.

Collecting this information is easier than you might think. Take the last page; the most important part of the Mackay 66. Customers are remarkably willing to share their management’s goals and issues with you. But salespeople being salespeople, you often just ignore it.

Don’t be turned off because I’m offering you a form. It isn’t that tough to use. You’re probably doing a lot of it already, and the Mackay 66 will just help you systematize your information in a way that will make it more useful and accessible.

Though most of the information will come from personal contact with your customer and from observation, you don't have to be the sole collector. Your resources are:

- Customers
- Suppliers
- Banks
- Newspapers
- Trade Publications
- Television
- Receptionists
- Secretaries
- Assistants

In our shop, one of the duties of secretaries is to scan the local papers, *The Wall Street Journal* and *The New York Times*, daily. Anything that relates to our top twenty customers is a must read for anyone concerned with the account.

Two cautionary notes: It's a changing world, so the 66 must be updated continually. And, because of the kind of private information that often ends up in these questionnaires, they must be given secure storage, with only numbered copies and no dupes floating around.

Remembering birthdays

At our company we have our customers' birthdays on computer, and they get a birthday card. But guess what? That buyer also gets called in person, and asked out to lunch, when that special day of the year rolls around.

Hometown

As for the hometown of the buyer, it's the source of an endless supply of new clips to mail.

Education

One day I called on a buyer who, it turned out, had graduated from the same high school I did – about fifteen years earlier. We both had the fabled Miss Malmon for English. The yarns we told were fabulous; the envelopes he bought were even more fabulous.

Family

I luckily overheard a buyer's secretary on the phone arranging to have her twelve-year-old daughter driven to her gymnastics event. Obviously I asked about the daughter. Suddenly there I was, watching the Mighty Mite compete in the parallel bars event. A month later, after having brought myself up to speed in gymnastics, I mentioned it to the buyer – and got my first order the same day.

Exposing your personality

Once you attach your personality to a proposition, people start reacting to the personality and stop reacting to the proposition.

A true salesperson gets the reorder

My definition of a salesperson is not someone who can get the order. Anyone can get the order if he tells enough lies – for example, about price or delivery time. A great salesperson is someone who can get the order – and the reorder – from a prospect who is already doing business with someone else.

It starts with the sales call

It all starts with the sales call. I have never made a cold call in my life. Before I see anyone on a sales call for the first time, I see to it that I'm introduced. The salesperson's classic dilemma is set out in an ad done forty years ago by McGraw Hill to promote advertising.

The tough prospect says:

- I don't know who you are.
- I don't know your company.
- I don't know what your company stands for.
- I don't know your company's customers.
- I don't know your company's products.
- I don't know your company's reputation.
- Now ... what was it you wanted to sell me?

When you're not an IBM ... Customer recommendations

If you're selling for a big outfit, an IBM, your introduction is made, in part, by the company's advertising, marketing and public relations program. If you're not selling for an IBM, you need another effective entry. The best is a recommendation from one of your own customers, someone already known to your prospect.

Like most salespeople, I've spent a lifetime trying to build a network of customers and friends who will give me a line of communication into almost every office in my city.

There are two ways to do it; retail and wholesale. Retail means the one-at-a-time kind of contacts that are built up thru participation in community or social activities. Wholesale means the recognition, and acceptance, extended by people who don't know you personally, but who have heard about you as a speaker, read your articles, or read about your civic activities in the papers.

Customer research

I've bought one share of stock in almost all the publicly held companies in our area. We keep the annual reports in a library in our office where our salespeople can get at them.

Find out as much information as you can about your client or prospect companies from either public sources, like your broker or the city library's business section, or from private sources like Dun & Bradstreet, or your banker, lawyer or accountant.

Somewhere within six blocks of every company is a favored watering hole. I know of one salesman who has developed the technique of waiting in his car across from the prospect's parking lot on Friday afternoons for the five o'clock whistle and then following the procession to the saloon of choice. Whatever it is he wants to know, whether it's about a prospect or a competitor, can usually be uncorked in this convivial atmosphere.

The first appointment ... showing your interest in the customer

You're about to call to make an appointment to see the tough prospect. Your call is answered by the company receptionist. You do **not** ask for Mr. T.P. You say, "I'm going to ask you in a moment to connect me with Mr. T.P.'s office, but before I do, could you kindly remind me of the name of his secretary?" She will. Then ask her to connect you with Mr. T.P.'s office.

"Hello, Angela? I'm Harvey Mackay, President of Mackay Envelope Corporation. (Straight to her brain ... "Who is this guy? How does he know my name? Have I met him?") I've written Mr. T.P. within the past two weeks, and now I'm calling him from Minneapolis. I would like to see Mr. T.P. I would like to see him for exactly three hundred seconds. I will go as far as Guam or Sri Lanka just for the purpose of seeing him for those three hundred seconds, and if I take longer I'll donate five hundred dollars to T.P.'s favorite charity, which I believe is the Boy Scouts, isn't it?"

The truth is, I never take the full five minutes. I simply introduce myself and say, “As you may know, we’re bidding on your contract. I just came here to tell you, as president of Mackay Envelope, that we regard your business as significant. If we are fortunate enough to receive your business, I’ll take a personal interest in seeing to it that you will receive the service and craftsmanship you have every right to expect.” That’s it. In and out in two and one half minutes. And I follow up with a pre-signed letter postmarked that day from Minneapolis thanking him for his time and restating the same pitch I gave him in person.

If “Angela” won’t make the appointment for you, try to get T.P. to call back by saying, “Angela, even if he won’t see me, perhaps he will talk to me. I am going to be in my office at the following times: 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. today; 8 a.m. to Noon tomorrow.” And so on. Then instruct your secretary as follows. “When and if Mr. T.P. calls at any of these times, you’re to say; ‘Oh yes, Mr. T.P., he’s been expecting your call. I’ll put you right thru.’”

All right, you’ve done all that. You’ve talked to T.P., you’ve sent him little love notes for two years, mailed him a million boxes of apricots from the Fruit of the Month Club, and you still haven’t gotten even a whiff of an order. So what? Be patient; you will. You have positioned yourself in the best possible spot you can be in: Number Two. And a very strong Number Two, because no one, including Number One, is going to half the trouble you are to keep this account aware of your interest.

The law of large numbers

Apply the law of large numbers to your prospect list. Position yourself as Number Two to every prospect on your list and keep adding to the list. I can promise you that if your list is long enough, there are going to be Number Ones that retire or die or lose their territories for a hundred other reasons and succumb to the law of large numbers.

Set up a daily call schedule

Set up a schedule with a fixed number of calls to be made every working day, and complete that schedule. If you make ten stops but only one eyeball to eyeball sales call, you’ve made only one call. As a salesperson, keeping track of your time is the moral equivalent to a dieter counting calories, except you are monitoring your output, not your intake.

It is an absolutely fail-safe method – the only one there is – to ensure success. If you give yourself a reasonable work program and follow it, you’ll hit the top of the charts. It’s my experience that salespeople who do monitor themselves this way actually give themselves a tougher program to follow than their sales managers give them. That’s because we know ourselves well enough to know that our real capacity far exceeds the average expectations others have for us.

Setting goals

If you don’t have a destination, you’ll never get there. Setting goals is simply the long-term version of keeping track of your time. Actually, a three-step process is involved:

- Setting goals
- Developing a plan to achieve those goals
- Keeping track of your time to make sure your plan gets executed

IBM’s basic plan for achieving the company’s goals consists of three simple parts: respect for the individual, whether it’s a customer, employee, or supplier; pursuit of excellence; and outstanding customer service.

Your personal plans and goals don’t even have to be that complicated. How about a goal like improving your sales ranking one quartile, or adding X more accounts, Y more income, or Z more total sales?

A goal is a dream with a deadline.

Attitude – The four minute mile

Remember the four-minute mile? People had been trying to achieve it since the days of the ancient Greeks. Nothing worked. So they decided it was impossible. And for thousands of years everyone believed it. It was physiologically impossible for a human being to run a mile in four minutes. Our bone structure was all wrong. Wind resistance was too great. Inadequate lung power. There were a million reasons.

Then one man, one single human being, proved that the doctors, the trainers, the athletes, and the millions and millions before him who tried and failed, were all wrong. And miracle of miracles, the year after Roger Bannister broke the four-minute mile, 37 other runners broke the four-minute mile, and the year after that 300 runners broke the four-minute mile. What happened? There were no great breakthroughs in training. Human bone structure didn't suddenly improve. But human attitudes did.

Making dreams happen – “Projecting”

When I was thirteen I dreamed of owning a factory. When I owned the factory I dreamed of selling the largest and most prestigious account in town and finally achieved it.

I came to realize that fantasizing, projecting yourself into successful situations, is one of the most powerful means there is to achieve personal goals. It's what an athlete does when he comes onto the field to kick a field goal with three seconds on the clock, sixty thousand people in the stands, thirty million people watching on TV, and the game in the balance. Great athletes seem to have something in common: the ability to project. Even in the middle of the action, they see things happen a split second before they happen.

Victor Frankl, a successful Viennese psychiatrist, spent a considerable period of time in a Nazi prison camp. He said in a speech, “There is only one reason why I am here today. What kept me alive was you. Others gave up hope. I dreamed. I dreamed that someday I would be here, telling you how I, Victor Frankl, had survived the Nazi concentration camps. I've never been here before, I've never seen any of you before, I've never given this speech before. But in my dreams, in my dreams, I have stood before you and said these words a thousand times.”

Attention to the details

If you run a business there are 1001 ways to screw up every day, and almost all of them can be avoided with a little more attention to detail or common courtesy. A customer calls and gets put on hold for too long or gets shuffled around to three or four different people. Goodbye customer. The order is lost or is late or is the wrong color; or whatever. Everything can go wrong. If you're in charge, your job is to minimize the mistakes.

You can't be everywhere at once. You know better than to try to solve your problems by merely sending out another memo. Yet you still have to try to impress all of your people with the importance of paying attention to details. How do you accomplish this? The strategy is leadership. Nobody is going to believe it's important unless you, the boss, make it seem important.

Lou Holtz, the head football coach at Notre Dame, is a stickler for detail. He does it this way.

The team has a road game at Purdue. They've been instructed to wear coats and ties to the stadium because they'll be closely observed as representatives of the University of Notre Dame. They're waiting to board the bus to go to the stadium for the game. And waiting. Coach Holtz shows up. Doesn't say a word. Just goes down the line and looks them over. And over. Finally he goes up to one of the players, smiles, reaches up and straightens the player's tie, and then nods to the driver of the bus. Not until then is the door to the bus opened and the team

permitted to load up. He hasn't said anything, but the message is clear: If you're going to be a winner, guys, look like a winner. Little things mean everything.

Bud Grant, another great football coach and motivator, had another gimmick. The very first drill at the very first practice session of every Vikings training camp was the same: Grant personally demonstrated and the players practiced how to line up properly for the playing of the national anthem. And they got the message. Let the other teams stand around like they're in a bread line; you're special, you're winners, so you look and act like winners every second you're part of this team.

You can preach about the little things and discipline until your tongue hangs out, but it won't work unless you yourself find a way to dramatize it and make it seem important enough, so the message gets thru.

What's the difference between the CEO of Company X prowling the halls and looking for messy desks, and Holtz straightening neckties or Grant showing grown men how to stand up straight? After all, they're all tidying up with the same objective in mind; to demonstrate leadership and instill a sense of the importance of detail.

Build a team of winners

Dennis Connor, the man who put the blocks to Australia and won back the America's Cup in four straight races, explained in a few words how he did it: "I surround myself with quality people that make me look good."

Winners surround themselves with other winners. A winner knows he's a winner. He doesn't need second-raters and yes-men around to feed his ego.

Efficiency not to be overdone

Your best people may spend their most productive time staring at the wall. There's a story that a manager who couldn't use his concert tickets for Schubert's Unfinished Symphony gave them to his work study management executive (the efficiency expert) and received the following report after the concert.

- For considerable periods the four oboe players had nothing to do. Their number should be reduced and their work spread over the whole orchestra.
- Forty violins were playing identical notes. This seems unnecessary duplication, and this section should be dramatically cut. If a larger volume of sound is required, this could be achieved thru an electronic amplifier.
- Much effort was absorbed in the playing of demi/semi-quavers. This seems an excessive refinement, and it is recommended that all notes be rounded to the nearest semi-quaver. If this were done, it should be possible to use trainees and lower-grade operators.
- No useful purpose is served by repeating with horns the passage that has already been handled by the strings. If all such redundant passages were eliminated, the concert could be reduced to twenty minutes.
- If Schubert had attended to these matters, he probably would have been able to finish the symphony after all.

Efficiency achieved at the expense of creativity is counter-productive. Don't equate activity with efficiency. You are paying your key people to see the big picture. Don't let them get bogged down in a lot of meaningless meetings and paper stuffing. Announce a Friday afternoon off once in a while. Cancel a Monday morning meeting or two.

It's more fun when it's spontaneous. You don't have time to wait until the calendar tells you it's time for the Christmas party or the office picnic or some other form of compulsory fun. When you sense that the pressure has really risen and stayed on too long, when you can feel the concentration level going down – that's the time to have the party or to come up with the tickets

to the ball game or the concert. You'll be pleasantly surprised at the results the next morning after that freebie from the boss.

When critique is necessary

It isn't the people you fire who make your life miserable. It's the people you don't.

The best way to chew someone out ... Have them over and sit in your chair and ask, "All right, Jack, now what would you say if you were me?"

The spirit of an entrepreneur

Entrepreneurs share a common trait with good salespeople. Both are able to communicate a sense of self-confidence and importance about their mission that is contagious to all around them. Entrepreneurs scratch before they itch. They dare to fix things before they break because it is part of their make-up to seek out fresh challenges. They determine the agenda. They set the pace. They dominate the field of play.

If you're an entrepreneur, you know it. And if you are, your competitors have reason to dread it when you feel the onset of restlessness. It means you're ready to make another move. Don't fight it – it's the entrepreneur's greatest strength. At the same time, recognize your greatest weakness; an eye for detail, which all too often translates into an inability to manage the financial end of the business.

Luck, and hard work

"I'm a great believer in luck," said Stephen Leacock, the Canadian humorist. "And the harder I work, the luckier I get."

Curt Carlson, chief executive of the privately held Carlson Companies, has a very simple philosophy about work. He says the first five days of the week, Monday thru Friday, are when you work to keep up with the competition. It's on Saturdays and Sundays that you get ahead of them. A lot of people would call Carlson a workaholic. Of course he doesn't think so. To him, work isn't work. Obviously he doesn't work for money only.

Peak performers

It's the "peak performers" who do the best job of handling the load. They can turn on tremendous bursts of speed for a week, two weeks, three weeks, when it's needed for some particularly important task, and then be unashamedly lazy in between when the nature of the work is routine.

Peak performers can distinguish between goal-oriented performance, really productive work, and mere wheel-spinning. They are astute in avoiding the latter. Classic entrepreneurial boredom sets in ... and then they get out of the way for a while. Knowing when not to work hard is as important as knowing when to.

Stay on the cutting edge

Dig your well before you're thirsty. Don't wait to buy when everyone else is bidding ... see the value long before it's recognized in the marketplace.

Take time to learn about your people

Find out enough about the people you're working with so you can show some genuine personal concern about them. Express that concern and make them your friends. One at a time. Your long-term success depends on their performance.

Successful politicians realize they get most of their votes retail, one at a time, from constituent service and personal contact; not wholesale, from their positions on the issues. In other words,

a vote will often support someone he disagrees with, but never someone he dislikes. It works the same way in business.

Recovery from mistakes

If you can afford to buy your way out of a problem, you haven't got a problem ... it's just an expense. Once the mistake is recognized, what's lost is lost. Don't freeze. Act. If you can buy your way back on the right track, do it. Quickly.

A key customer is furious because your factory blew the delivery date. Solution: Buy your way out. Tell him, “No charge” for the shipment, even if it means you have to hand out \$5,000 to \$10,000 worth of merchandise. You will keep that customer forever, and your firm's reputation and morale is preserved. Sure, it can cost big money, but which is cheaper; eating the loss, or trying to put a new key customer on the books and having a once key customer spread poison all over town?

Hiring people

The acid test for hiring ... ask yourself, “How would you feel having this same person working for the competition instead of you?”

Know thine enemy

A manufacturer I know has a major competitor with a larger and more modern facility, located directly across the street from his own plant. They're both fine companies, and for years my friend was rankled by the fact that his competitor was the sole supplier to one of the area's Fortune 500 companies. Thought he was always willing to accept the proposition that no account was locked up forever, he couldn't dislodge the competition and crack this prospect. He tried all the standard ploys, and he got nowhere.

Then he tried a different approach, and instead of concentrating on the customer he focused on his competition. Did they have a weakness that played to one of his strengths?

It turned out they did. The prospect had expanded operations in the South. When he analyzed the competition he realized that their closest plant was in New York. He had a plant in Birmingham, Alabama. Did he use that information to gain a competitive edge? You bet he did. It was obvious that his competitor couldn't match him in price or service in that particular area. He never would have won the account if he had kept his attention solely on his prospect.

Notes of appreciation; especially to the most important people

Put the most important people you know on that list of people to whom you drop notes. Yes, it's lonely at the top, and the bigger they are the more strokes they need. One of the forces that drives a super achiever far harder than the rest of us is an inordinate need for recognition and approval. Money is one way to measure it. That's why they work so hard to get it. But so is a compliment from a friend. And those are a lot harder to come by. So if you know one of these types, let them know you appreciate them.

The success formula

Determination + Goal Setting + Concentration = Success

The Mackay 66

MacKay 66-Question Customer Profile	
CUSTOMER	
1	Name Nickname Title
2	Company Name Address
3	Home Address
4	Phone Business Cell Home
5	Birthdate Place of Birth Hometown
6	Outstanding Physical Characteristics Height/Weight
EDUCATION	
7	High School/Year College Graduated When Degrees
8	College Honors Advanced Degrees
9	College fraternity or sorority Sports
10	Extracurricular college activities
11	If customer didn't attend college, what did they do instead?
12	Military service Discharge rank Attitude toward being in Service
FAMILY	
13	Marital status Spouse name
14	Spouse education
15	Spouse interests/activities
16	Wedding Anniversary
17	Children (if any) Names/Ages Does customer have custody?
18	Childrens' education
19	Childrens' interests
BUSINESS BACKGROUND	
20	Previous employment Company Location Dates Title Company Location Dates Title

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21	Previous position at present company Title Dates	
22	Any "status symbols" in office?	
23	Professional/trade associations Office Honors	
24	Any mentors?	
25	Business relationship with others within our company?	
26	Is it a good relationship? Why?	
27	What other people in our company know this customer?	
28	Type of connection Nature of relationship?	
29	Client's attitude toward his/her company?	
30	Long range business objective?	
31	Immediate business objective?	
32	Greatest concern to customer at this time?	
33	Does company think of the present or the future? Why?	
	SPECIAL INTERESTS	
34	Clubs/Service Clubs?	
35	Politically active? Party Importance to customer	
36	Active in community? How?	
37	Religion Active?	
38	Highly confidential items NOT to be discussed with customer (divorce, member of AA, etc)	
39	On what subjects (outside of business) does customer have strong feelings?	
	LIFESTYLE	
40	Medical history Current health Past	
41	Does customer drink? If yes, what and how much?	
42	If no, offended by others drinking?	
43	Does customer smoke? If no, object to others?	
44	Favorite place for lunch Dinner	
45	Favorite items on menu	

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46	Does customer object to having anyone buy his/her meal?	
47	Hobbies/recreational interests What does customer like to read?	
48	Vacation habits	
49	Spectator sports interests	
50	Kind of car(s)	
51	Conversational interests	
52	Whom does customer seem anxious to impress?	
53	How does he/she want to be seen by people?	
54	What adjectives would you use to describe customer?	
55	What is he/she most proud of having achieved?	
56	What do you feel is customer's long-range personal objective?	
57	What do you feel is customer's immediate personal goal?	
	THE CUSTOMER & YOU	
58	What moral/ethical considerations are involved when you work with customer?	
59	Does customer feel any obligation to you, your company, or your competition? If so, what?	
60	Does the proposal you plan to make to him/her require customer to change a habit or take an action contrary to custom?	
61	Is he/she primarily concerned about the opinion of others?	
62	Self-centered? Highly ethical?	
63	What are the key problems as customer sees them?	
64	What are the priorities of the customer's management? Any conflicts/ between customer/mgt?	
65	Can you help with these problems? How?	
66	Does competitor have better answers to the above questions than you have?	
	ADDITIONAL NOTES	

Notes by Bob Evelyn

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