

SALES STAR



## Kevin Atamaniuk: Defining *Real* Success

[By Akbar Ali]

As director of business development for Kettley, a leading financial technology company, Kevin Atamaniuk brings more than 20 years of diverse experience to an industry dedicated to increasing sales and building a loyal customer base. With Kettley providing financial planning solutions to more than 65,000 advisors around the country, it is Atamaniuk's job to make sure the company client base continues to expand — and for a man who has spent much of his career in the top bracket of sales professionals, it's not a challenge; it's a guarantee.

When asked what propelled him into a career in sales, Atamaniuk offers a one-word answer: "Opportunity." He attended college in Canada at Lakehead University in Thunder Bay, Ontario, and describes his time there as a "great educational and social experience," one in which he played sports and enjoyed the freedom of campus life and which, most importantly, helped him come into his own as he learned to debate with and challenge his professors on any given subject.

He recalls, "At that time there was a recession in Canada, and the teachers were from the industry. This gave me a tremendous foundation for the 'real world.'"

After graduation he found work with Thunder Bay's first computer company. His primary duty was to instruct accountants on how to transfer their work from paper to computers and all the attendant advantages which are now considered standard procedure.

As it turned out, Atamaniuk would have to open his own door into the company by calling them out on their own shortcomings.

He recounts, "One day, I found a bug in the accounting software (TCS) and called technical support to assist me. When they told me they were too busy to help, I suggested they hire me, and so they did."

Six months into his job, he was promoted to the position of national trainer. While he was busy training others on the ins and outs of software, a sales manager suggested that Atamaniuk transfer from his technical post to a sales position since he was actually outperforming the salespeople managing the company accounts. This sales manager would go on to become one of Atamaniuk's most influential mentors on his path to sales success.

Atamaniuk's career flourished from that

point on; he went on to work for a number of software companies where he was engaged in a wide array of professional responsibilities.

"I designed, implemented, led, and built lucrative sales organizations, including a startup company. Here I was the vice president of business development and sales, where I was responsible for closing \$10.5 million in contracts and was instrumental in securing \$5 million in angel venture financing and \$7 million in bridge financing from major clients," he says.

All of this experience led to his current high-profile position as director of business development for Kettley, where he develops strategies to build sales while supervising the company's team of sales professionals.

The secret to his success?

"By attracting top talent and nurturing additional sales channels, I have successfully increased revenue for the company," he reveals.

With more than two decades of successful experience in a multitude of industries and positions, Atamaniuk has certainly had a number of distinguished career high points, the most memorable being achieving and maintaining his highly competitive sales track record.

**Q. What do you do for fun?**

A. Family activities, free diving, kayaking, basketball, racquetball, and following my girls' school and sports activities.

**Q. What CD is in your CD player right now?**

A. *Aerosmith*.

**Q. What is the last magazine you read?**

A. *Investment News Daily*.

**Q. What is your favorite TV show?**

A. *24*.

**Q. Who are your role models?**

A. My dad.

**Q. What makes you laugh?**

A. Wit.

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"I have spent 90% of my career in the top 10% of the sales force," he says. "While at Zenith Data Systems, I was number two out of over 300 salespeople at 324% of quota."

Aside from his own personal ambition and keenness for driving sales and connecting with clients, many individuals have contributed to Atamaniuk's success by serving as mentors over the years. His first sales manager demonstrated to him the vital importance of planning and having a defined, concrete methodology in one's approach to achieving sales goals. His time at Zenith Data Systems helped him understand that "it is all about planning and activity," while another company he worked for, Sterling Software, bestowed upon him a more personal lesson: work hard, but remember it is for your family.

His advice to new sales professionals searching for success includes the five most

important lessons he's acquired over the years:

First, a career in sales is really a career in activity. As he puts it, "Sales is activity, activity, activity."

Also, as stated before, planning is paramount; not only does it help to have a detailed plan of attack, but it also serves its adherents doubly by preventing poor performance.

Recognize and cherish the reciprocity of your relationships with clients; understand their business issues, and understand that *their* business issues are *your* business issues.

Follow-up is a critical step in not only measuring the success of your methods but also developing and building interpersonal trust and professional relationships.

And lastly, understand that success at the expense of your family is failure.

In light of such revelatory and unconventional insights, it's safe to say that Kevin Atamaniuk is both a professional star *and* a personal success.

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