

SALES STAR


Nancy Fox: Developing Success in Business and Beyond

[By Akbar Ali]

As a professional sales coach and business development specialist, Nancy Fox is here to tell the industry that the days of traditional “selling” and “pitching” are over. She is ushering in a new and revolutionary approach which teaches sales professionals how to build their client base without sounding like a salesperson. She has also had significant success in not only teaching sales managers how to “coach” their sales staffs into success, but has also highlighted the critical value of establishing client connections and enhanced business relationships. Her innovative alternative to traditional sales methods forms the backbone of Fox Coaching Associates’ *Biz Dev Success*, a professional training program known for creating breakthroughs in business by teaching company leaders and associates how to “make rain without the pain.”

Like many professional women making their way through the corporate world, Fox was enjoying a long run of career success when a personal trial forced her to take stock of how far she had come and where she wanted to go in the future.

“I had a long career in the intimate apparel industry (over 20 years) as a senior marketing executive. I traveled the world and led design and marketing teams in product development and strategic line development. And then, I was diagnosed with breast cancer.

“It completely altered my world. Although I was very fortunate due to early diagnosis, I became much more focused on making a difference with people in a truly profound way. Fashion was fun, but having a deeper impact with people was my purpose. I was very fortunate to have an exceptional background in business from some excellent companies, both large and small, domestic and international. These experiences provided a strong business and strategic focus not always found in the coaching world. I was able to leverage these experiences and offer them to my clients in their career development objectives.”

Fox’s path to business success began in Buffalo, New York, where she was a college student in a time she describes as

“challenging tradition and conservatism — it was a time of idealism.” Upon graduating, she decided that the business world was where her ambition led, and she soon discovered that the key to getting into that exclusive world was to network.

“My father had a friend who was a senior

executive in a successful intimate apparel company in California. I reluctantly contacted him (what was so great about ladies’ underwear, anyway?), and he put me in touch with a senior executive in sales seeking to build his sales team. We were instantly connected, and I began my long career in this industry via a sales support position. I loved the challenge, the industry, and the people. It was a great fit (no pun intended), and I was soon promoted to the product development division.”

Having successfully launched herself into the business world, Fox would spend the next phase of her career in a variety of companies, solidifying her reputation as a leader and problem-solver who not only led her companies to success, but learned from them as well.

“Over the next two decades, I rose in leadership positions yet didn’t mind traversing from one company and opportunity to the next in order to build a broader level of experience and expertise. I was fortunate to have worked in larger organizations where the corporate environment honed a level of professionalism I wouldn’t have received elsewhere. I also worked in a Japanese company, so I gained the understanding of working with other cultures and business viewpoints.”

Q. What do you do for fun?

A. Play with Baxter, my dog — teach him tricks — lots of tennis, read every business book and non-fiction book I can get my hands on, write, and watch lots of movies.

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

A. Jackson Browne, *I’m Alive* (just dug it out of the archives).

Q. What is the last magazine you read?

A. I am usually reading several at the same time. Just picked up *Pink* for the first time, and also read *Inc.* and *Law Firm Magazine*.

Q. What is your favorite TV show?

A. Mostly shows on HBO — *Entourage* and *Curb Your Enthusiasm* (when I watch TV at all).

Q. Who is your role model?

A. Oprah and Bill Clinton.

Q. What makes you laugh?

A. Chris Rock, and when Baxter plays with his toys.

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With such a long history of distinguished and diverse career successes, Fox has naturally experienced many professional high points over the years, though none as notable as identifying a market niche for her company which paved the way into a new market and created opportunities to expand its client base.

"This translated into greater revenues and profits for my division, but more importantly, it was great fun to strategize, gain buy-in, and then follow through on a concept. I also learned the importance of gaining the support of change agents within an organization when I wanted to bring an opportunity to fruition. I realized I couldn't do it alone."

In light of the fact that Fox was rising in the business world at a time when women in prominent positions were still something of an anomaly, she found two mentors who proved especially influential in shaping the path of her career, though not necessarily in the way one might expect.

"I had two mentors, and learned as much about what to do as what *not* to do to be successful. One female mentor helped

educate me on the business side of the business. A male mentor helped me in the relationship-building side of the business (interesting that the male focused on relationships, while the female focused on the mechanics). Nevertheless, I did get some poor counsel from my male mentor, who encouraged me to 'not rock the boat' when it came time to ask for a promotion and a raise. As I look back on it, this mindset is what keeps women, and men, from believing in themselves and asking for what they believe they are worth. It took me a long time to overcome that counsel."

Being a professional coach, Fox is in the business of providing advice and wisdom to those who seek her counsel. Her advice to young and aspiring professionals is to apply the dual concepts of ambition and charity, which need not be mutually exclusive.

"Be generous and be unstoppable. If you come from the mindset of 'What's in this for me?' and a scarcity mentality, you will not generate results as quickly as you will with the 'givers gain' attitude.

"Success is the signpost of an unstoppable, unshakeable commitment to a purpose. I love this story:

"An actress had been trying to get her big break for ten years. She contacted her agent and said: 'I've been trying to get a big break in this business for almost a decade. Do you think I should throw in the towel?'

"He replied, 'I think you're a beautiful, talented actress. But maybe you're right — if you haven't made it by now, maybe you should move on.'

"She replied: 'Wrong answer, jerk' (the term she really used was a lot more graphic). Six months later, Sharon Stone got her big break in *Basic Instinct*."

With decades of business expertise behind her, Fox has proven that her professional instincts are right on the money.

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