

SALES STAR



Chet Holmes: The Authority on Sales and Marketing

[By Akbar Ali]

Even by his own auspicious standards, Chet Holmes's success in sales and marketing is nothing short of extraordinary. Unofficially dubbed "America's greatest sales and marketing executive," Holmes has a unique track record that few others even dare to dream of achieving. He has doubled the sales volume for a variety of leading national companies and businesses, granting him the kind of rarified and multifaceted industry expertise that comes along but once in a generation. A best-selling author whose sales and business tomes have topped the best-selling lists of both the *New York Times* and Amazon.com, Holmes is an unbeaten results-producer, proving that success and strategy are two things no one in the industry understands better.

In spite of his long-standing success in increasing sales results, Holmes's entry into the industry was more the product of serendipity than anything else. Indeed, he ventured into sales with little experience or know-how, unsure of what this professional experiment would yield.

"Like almost 100% of salespeople, I stumbled into it. I didn't even know if I'd be any good at it. And then when I was tripling my quota and other sales reps couldn't even hit theirs, I suspected I had found my place in the world."

While he has enjoyed very lucrative achievements as both a consultant and trainer, Holmes is someone who doesn't credit his understanding of sales and marketing to any formal instruction. In fact, the formal structure of education while he was growing up was something which held little sway over his interests.

"I had moved eight times by the time I got to high school, and then went to four high schools. I didn't like school, I didn't care about it, and I never looked back once out of high school where I was a poor student who everyone predicted would end up leading a career as a gas station attendant. No offense to that profession, but no one would've ever thought I'd be earning million-dollar fees one day."

Forsaking the traditional sheepskin, Holmes transitioned from high school to the workforce, finding his calling in the unpredictable and unconventional world of sales. The skills necessary to generate real results in sales came naturally to him, paving the way for a quick climb up the ladder of success.

"From my fist sales job to my last — before moving into management, and then onto selling my services as an expert at increasing sales — I was the number one top producer in every job I ever held."

What was the key to his accomplishments? Overcoming the fear of that all-important first contact.

"I *loved* to cold call. I looked forward to it and took it on as a personal daily challenge to hone and polish my skills. I have since never met anyone else like that, except one other guy — and he now works for me making millions!"

It was his work with Charlie Munger, who entrusted him with the operation of nine divisions of one company, which allowed Holmes to realize his full potential by developing what would in time become his signature method.

"From being a top producer, I moved into management working for billionaire Charlie Munger. I started to shape the entire operation like what a top producer would do. For example, 52% of all salespeople give up after a single rejection. Yes, studies show that the average client has to be approached after eight nos before they will say yes. So I built a program, [a] system, if you will, that laid out the exact 12 steps every rep would do to go after any account I thought should be in our magazines or newspapers."

Q. What do you do for fun?

A. Boating in the summer. Love it. I live on our boat all summer, or whenever I'm not traveling. Of course, I love my kids. They are my greatest achievement.

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

A. Who still uses CDs? I have 6,000 songs in my iPod. Listening to Christmas music now.

Q. What is the last magazine you read?

A. *Inc.*, *Entrepreneur*, and entertainment magazines as I also have a movie deal with Warner Brothers, so I keep abreast.

Q. What is your favorite TV show?

A. Of all time, *Friends*. Seriously great writing. Consistently funny. And *Seinfeld*.

Q. Who is your role model?

A. Same list as above. All the greats. And Hale Dwoskin of *The Sedona Method*. That's really powerful stuff and so simple.

Q. What makes you laugh?

A. I try to laugh as much as possible, so everything.

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The astonishing success he had in multiplying the sales volume for Munger's company divisions is also Holmes most noted career achievement, establishing the gold standard of success for not only Holmes, but for the industry itself.

"I ended up doubling the sales of that first company in 15 months flat. I then took on several more divisions and doubled every one of them, now in 12 months. I got the hang of it. The real secret to great selling is to achieve mastery. To achieve mastery, you do the same 12 things 4,000 times, like getting appointments.

"I worked that over so many times and from so many angles that everyone on my staff became very good at it. For most of the companies I look at today, if I just doubled their appointment setting skills, their sales

will double. I've helped companies increase their appointment setting tenfold."

Of course, the level of success which Holmes has achieved was not the product of one man's abilities, especially in a professional arena like sales where the value of relationships is paramount. Several colleagues have proven to be valuable mentors in Holmes's career, though one stands out above the rest.

"Charlie Munger was great to work for. Nothing was lost on this man. Every subtle nuance of my talent he seemed to get in a glance. He was a great influence. Honest beyond reproach.

"But I have learned from everyone. Great sales executives never learn enough.

I've studied everyone: Tom Hopkins, Brian Tracy, Tony Robbins, Jay Levinson, Michael Gerber, Jay Abraham, Harv Eker — and now every one of these folks are friends of mine. Some are very close friends and several are clients. Every one of them has been a business partner of mine."

For the aspiring sales professional, Holmes offers not only invaluable advice, but the potential to work directly with the master himself.

"Read my book, *The Ultimate Sales Machine*. For a mere \$25, I have packed it with a \$150 million learning curve. I give it all. And if you're the person I describe in chapter five, contact us — we want to hire you. We hire a new salesperson every single day at Chet Holmes International. A top producer can earn \$400,000 here."

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