

CAN YOU TRIPLE YOUR SALES GROWTH IN THIS ECONOMY?

By Duane Sparks, CEO, The Sales Board, Inc.

Action Selling™

The Exclusive Sales Board, Inc. Sales Process

Action Selling™ is a research-proven selling process that breaks a sale into nine key components sequenced in the order of the five natural buying decisions all customers make.

Since 1990, Action Selling has been used by more than 400,000 sales professionals world-wide. From small organizations, to multi-national sales teams, the principles used in the Action Selling process produce results.

Free Consultation

Contact the Sales Board today to learn how to effectively introduce Action Selling to your organization and see a dramatic impact on your sales performance.

Call us at 800-232-3485 to schedule a free 30-minute review of your sales process.

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A small but mighty company shows how to achieve quantum growth by installing the right selling system, the right way.



Supply Chain Services Inc. of Stillwater, Minnesota, is a small private company with about 25 employees. It is 11 years old. It does business-to-business sales. It faces many of the same challenges that your company probably does. Yet it has grown dramatically despite the rotten economy since the crash of 2008.



In fact, this year Supply Chain Services (SCS) did something remarkable. It grew revenues by 60 percent—with no loss of profit margin. Even the company's managers were surprised. A year ago, they thought they were being plenty ambitious when they set a growth goal of 20 percent.

What happened? First, last year SCS acquired a new owner and CEO, Chip Emery. Second, Emery introduced a new sales system: Action Selling. Third, SCS made sure that every employee, not just the salespeople, received training in the Action Selling system.



That unusual third step—the idea of spreading training throughout the company—was crucial to achieving the eye-popping 60 percent growth rate. It allowed SCS to weave the new system into the organization so thoroughly that everyone—managers, technicians, and salespeople—could speak the same language and pull in the same direction.

If you imagine the company as a computer, Action Selling became its new operating system—a better, faster, and far more robust operating system. As SCS’s chief operating officer Dave Green puts it, “Action Selling provided the system, the language, and the sales culture that we needed to execute our ambitious growth strategy. It was exactly what we needed to do.”

Getting Focused

Founded in 2000, SCS sells barcode equipment and services to companies in the warehousing, distribution, and manufacturing industries. It can provide anything from a single, handheld barcode scanner or a freestanding barcode printer to an end-to-end wireless infrastructure that connects a multitude of computing devices for even the largest warehouse or factory operations.

When Emery took over in early 2010, he decided that the company’s entrepreneurial culture needed more sales focus. SCS would set one-year, three-year, and five-year goals, and then create a strategy to achieve them. To help plan, shape, and execute the strategy, he brought in the Action Selling system.

*SCS not only **Tripled its Sales Growth**, but increased average deal size and maintained margins.*

Given the down economy, the one-year growth target of 20 percent sounded ambitious to Dave Green, who had been with SCS since 2005. He and other executives saw a need to focus on maintaining margins because barcoding devices were increasingly perceived as commodities, vulnerable to price competition from other suppliers.

As it turned out, SCS not only maintained margins but increased average deal size and tripled its sales growth.

“We have a great sales force, but what are we doing better today?” Green asks rhetorically. “We use Action Selling to differentiate ourselves in a commodity marketplace. We have dramatically improved our ability to assess the customer’s needs and fit our solutions to those needs. And we confidently ask for commitment. We didn’t do that before we were trained in Action Selling.”

SCS’s sales force was pretty good to begin with. Based on post-training assessments, however, SCS salespeople improved their ability to gain commitment from customers by a whopping 98 percent. They also improved dramatically at other critical selling skills. After training, for example, they were 65 percent better at planning sales calls. They were 48 percent better at making effective presentations.



What do skill improvements actually look like in the field? A few months after receiving the Action Selling training, one of SCS’s senior salespeople met with CEO Emery to plan a call on a potentially major account. “It would be the fifth time we took a run at this company,”



I can't think of a single job that we didn't win since Action Selling.

Chip Emery
CEO, Supply Chain Services



Scan with your smartphone to watch Chip.

says Emery. The first four tries, before the training, all were unsuccessful.

The salesperson suggested that they start over. Using a bit of Action Selling terminology, he said: “Rather than make another presentation to them, let’s plan to Ask the Best Questions.” So, Emery says, instead of planning a fifth presentation, he and the salesperson worked out a list of questions to ask this particular client—questions likely to uncover the most useful, relevant information pertaining to the customer’s situation.

SCS not only won the business but got a thank-you from the customer for helping to clear up confusion about some operational issues. “This is a great example of how our team functions today,” says Emery. “I can’t think of a single job that we didn’t win since Action Selling.”

Is Everybody Onboard?

The fact that Action Selling is an effective system, one that can demonstrably improve sales performance, makes it a great tool. But the results you get from any tool depend on how you use it. SCS’s feat—60 percent growth in a down economy—was enabled by integrating Action Selling into the company’s day-to-day life.

“The difference between good and great lies in how thoroughly you absorb what the system gives you,” Green says. “When salespeople start to believe in and live the Action Selling process, that’s how you get the extra lift. Everything you need to accomplish this is built into the Action Selling training and coaching system.”

Every week SCS’s four top executives conduct Plan to Win sessions with the sales force. They use the language and the process of Action Selling to drill down to specific, concrete situations that the salespeople face on the job. What gets practiced and managed gets done.



Everything you need to accomplish this is built into the Action Selling training and coaching system.

I recommend Action Selling to anyone who is serious about growing their business.

Dave Green
COO, Supply Chain Services



Scan with your smartphone to watch Dave.

But it's more than just salesperson buy-in. "Everyone in our company sees and understands the benefits of Action Selling," Green says. "Our technical staff has a better idea of what we can do to satisfy a customer's needs. Our salespeople sell with far more confidence. Management understands what's going on in the field. We're very close to the customer because of how well we communicate with our sales force on every deal."

Action Selling was the perfect choice for SCS, Green says. "We waded in, studied and practiced hard, saw immediate results, and then practiced harder. Now we're exceeding our ambitious sales goals. I recommend Action Selling to anyone who is serious about growing their business."

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Duane Sparks is chairman and founder of The Sales Board, a Minneapolis-based strategic sales training company that has trained and certified more than 400,000 salespeople in more than 3,500 groups in the system and skills of Action Selling™. Sparks has guided companies through every phase of business development, from start-up,

turnaround, survival and rapid growth.

Having written five sales books and personally facilitated more than 300 Action Selling™ training sessions, he continues to engage in the business and art of the strategic sales process.

Duane Sparks is the author of Five Sales Books:



Action Selling: *How To Sell Like A Professional, Even If You Think You Are One*

Selling Your Price: *How To Escape The Race To The Bargain Basement*

Questions: *The Answer To Sales*

Masters of Loyalty: *How To Turn Your Sales Force Into A Loyalty Force*

Sales Strategy From The Inside Out: *How Complex Selling Really Works*

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or call 800-232-3485**

Over 100,000 copies of the Action Selling™ book have been sold worldwide. The Action Selling™ process has been taught to over 3,500 organizations and 400,000 sales professionals.