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SELLING IS EASY. STOP MAKING IT SO HARD.

BREAKAWAY SALES

A PROVEN STRUCTURE TO DOUBLE
YOUR SALES, FOREVER!

MIKE KERRISON

AUTHOR OF *LANDING ON YOUR FEET*

Praise for Breakaway Sales

(Taken from www.mikekerrison.com web site and course critiques)

“Many thanks for Breakaway Sales. As I mentioned at our kickoff meeting, you have a big piece of our success. A big piece. I appreciate what you have done from both a strategic planning and sales productivity perspective. Your programs work and we are grateful. Thanks for your friendship and it is wonderful to have someone with your many talents to rely on. We have a bright future.”

Roger King

President, EO Johnson Business Technologies

“Mike Kerrison is a rarity. Midwest charisma with a sharp business mind blends to drive real business results. When working with executives, he has the unique ability to quickly find order amidst many moving parts; and correctly distills concepts from seemingly random thoughts. His book is chock full of business wisdom. His passion and courage shine through in his books. He has humility to share his mistakes, so others won’t. He is one of a kind!”

John Hogg

President, Straightforward Consulting

“I knew there was something different about the Breakaway Sales Program ... different the many I have used in the past. I have been selling my entire career. During that time, I have attended several sales training programs. In my thirty-five years I have never encountered a program that was more professional, more comprehensive, and more applicable to today’s challenges than what Mike Kerrison has delivered to us these past years.”

Bryan Dixon

CEO, RK Dixon

“One of the big reasons I took the job at Micro Group was because I would get to work with Mike Kerrison. I knew I would learn a ton from this guy. I have used all of his tools and have become the top sales rep for my company. I could not have done it without him. Read the book!”

Eric Santucci

Regional Sales Director, Micro Group

“Mike brings the best combination of sales and strategy to the table than anything else that I have seen out there. And he challenges you. He holds you accountable to be your best self. Mike Kerrison is transformative. He is talent and energy and sales excellence all wrapped up in one. Read his book, get him involved, and he will fire up your company.”

Bill Berg

Sales Manager, The Lioce Group

“Mike Kerrison is pure inspiration to anyone he works with. He understands how to reshape your thinking so you can be free to reach your fullest potential. I have watched him work miracles with executive and sales teams. All of his books and articles are superb!”

Jane Malin

Executive Consultant, Bridge Consulting

“Mike was my mentor. He provided all the tools I needed to start, build, and eventually sell a successful IT Consulting Company. I could have never accomplished this level of success without his early involvement in my sales career.”

Marc Strazzanti

CEO, Datacom Consulting

“As a new CEO I needed to move quickly to re-tool my organization. Mike’s Breakaway Strategy Model combined with Breakaway Sales was exactly what I needed to drive the organization forward.”

Rob Adams

President & CEO, Bishop-McCann

“We brought Mike in for Sales Training last year. I was skeptical because I have seen a lot of poor trainers. Mike is one of a kind. I learned more in four days than perhaps the last four years. This book reflects those teachings.”

Mike Nelson

Regional Sales Manager, Philadelphia at Atlantic Tomorrow's Office

“We use Mike’s Breakaway Sales Model in our company. This model has allowed me to drive my sales force, set a solid plan in motion, acquire, and integrate two companies, and get results. I believe in Mike Kerrison. He’s been there and he cares!”

Steve Klatt

Owner-President, Advanced Imaging Solutions

“I have watched Mike double the productivity of many sales teams in less than two years. His Breakaway 200 % plan works. He believes that every sales rep has 2x inside of them and he knows how to get all of it. The book outlines this simple but effective strategy.”

Tim Allen

Vice President, Project Consulting Group

“General Mills is a better company having attended the Breakaway Sales program. We are getting impressive results. Medallion revenue is up 40 % and analytical is having record delivery. Lab cycle time is 33 % faster due to our re-design. The partnership between Medallion and Analytical is now solid

with real trust. These investments have paid off. Thanks to you, Mike, and your team for helping us get to the next level.”

Heather Larson

Vice President, Shared Services, General Mills

“Mike was referred to us by some trusted friends in our industry. We invited Mike to come in and over a few days he took us through a process which allowed us to identify, prioritize and implement the most important projects. Today we are still successfully using the breakaway sales tools Mike taught us and would recommend him to anyone needing assistance with their revenue growth plan.”

Jeff Masters

CEO, Laser Options

“As CEO of a sports manufacturing company, I engaged Mike Kerrison to bring a standardized, proven sales process to our company. Mike did a tremendous job facilitating a diverse group of salespeople with various levels of experience and varied backgrounds. He got them to focus on “how” they individually and collectively could transform and grow the revenues of our organization by creating and implementing strategic sales plans. I recommend Mike and his process to any organization that wants to increase revenue. Start with the book then get him involved!”

Mike Lane

CEO, Nevco

“Simply the best sales professional I have ever met.”

Don Phillips

President. RK Dixon

“I worked for Mike. He was my mentor. He promoted me to VP of Sales. I thrived under his leadership. Today, I own my own company. I doubt that would have ever happened without his guidance, his training, and his encouragement. That’s why I still use his Breakaway Sales Model. None better!”

Greg Conroy

CEO, Omni Business Solutions

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“Nothing happens until something is sold. This axiom is older than dirt. Nonetheless, nothing could be more profoundly true. You can give me people, products, services, plans, money, and prospects but, without sales, I have nothing. Conversely, you can take everything away from me, and let me keep my sales force, and I’ll be back in one year.”

Michael G Kerrison

A few thoughts before we start

I need to vent. I hate to do this to you, but you need to hear this first. I'm going to get a little edgy which is not my nature.

The manuscript for this book sat on my desktop for five years. The book defines with significant detail what I call the *Four Secrets of the Breakaway Sales Performer*. These secrets were screaming at me every time I opened my computer. Mike, "What are you going to do with me! I'm a bunch of disorganized themes! When do I get to become a book ... and hopefully a terrific book ... a life-changing book!" My answer had been, "I don't know. I'm not ready, and you're not going to rush me."

Then the pandemic hit. Great, now what? Maybe this book is now useless given this unprecedented post pandemic marketplace we are living in. Maybe selling has changed forever. Is there any new research on this topic? The truth is I was restless. Am I just an old dog barking a tired message into a sophisticated digital economy? Am I too late?

If you remember, "The Challenger Sale" stole the market claiming to be the next sales utopia. Is it? And then there's social selling, power analytics, auto-dialers, sales funnel platforms, and CRM systems. Sales Force and Inside Sales have changed the sales landscape for good, so they say. Microsoft now owns LinkedIn and Facebook marketing schemes seem to dominate the digital economy. Ok, if they're so dominant, then why did they change their name? IBM and all the other big boys are battling to be the Artificial Intelligence leader. And don't forget the thousands of charlatans who can snap off a video, build a landing page, fire off a few thousand spam-mails and proclaim themselves as sales experts. Folks, everybody has the new Kool-aide. And it drives me crazy!

So, I decided to wait things out. I stayed in the training room with my clients solving today's real problems. I was reskilling the sales team for today's market challenges. And over the last eighteen years I delivered over two hundred private Breakaway Sales Training engagements, and I am watching my clients double their revenues on the sturdy backs of amazing sales professionals.

Folks I don't have new Kool Aide for you. And furthermore, there is no room for the 80/20 rule in my world. I'm not big on Participation Trophies either – not in selling anyway. The way I see it, if I provide you with proven tools, training, and the support you need to be successful, and you don't produce, you're gone. That's the way it works if you're a salesperson. That's the way it has always worked. And you know it.

Anyway, I'm done waiting. You now have the book and I'm going to tell you the truth about selling. And I'm going to explain how it really works without the fluff. The good news is I'm no longer restless. Mostly pissed. Sales Teams have been let down and led down the wrong path for years. And here is where the venting begins.

First, I'll will say this. There are a few sales trainers out there that I admire. Who get it! I like Neil Rackham and his book SPIN selling. SPIN does some pretty good things for us. The only criticism I have for Neil is his claim that solution selling was introduced in the eighties. That is simply not true. IBM figured out solution selling way before anybody even called it that. I was there. I know. I also like Anthony Iannarino. His blogs are enthusiastic, his books are prescriptive, and he writes from experience. Larry Wilson brought us Councilor Selling and Social Styles much of which I still use today. He was brilliant! And we must never forget Tom Hopkins, Zig Ziglar, Brian Tracy, Tony Robbins,

Harvey Mackay, Buck Rogers, and I could go on. These people made great contributions to our world of selling. Some of their messages are eternal.

But look at what's happening now. Two guys that never made a living as salesmen, never held a territory, never carried a quota, never felt the pressure of closing a deal so they could pay their bills, writes a book called *The Challenger Sale*. This book is allegedly based upon research of over 6000 sales reps. Don't get me wrong, they are two smart guys, and they've accumulated some significant educational pedigrees. But how do you write about something you've never done? And where is the research? More importantly, where are the results? The *Challenger Sale* hit during the Great Recession ... everybody was scrambling for answers. No one was making quota. Resulting from their research, they claim that there are five different sales profiles, and that the Challenger is the highest producer. They assert that the sales rep must take charge of the conversation. In other words, get in the customers face about what's best for them. Are you kidding me? Says who? Believe me, the best in the world are not Challengers! They don't bludgeon their customers with their sales propaganda. They don't stroll into an account and claim themselves as having solution utopia. This is nonsense. Don't do this unless you want to get thrown out. Breakaways are consummate professionals, highly skilled problem solvers, they build trust easily, and they have earned a massive list of successful credentials. They are the real deal! They are not Challengers!

Today, I see claims out there that within ten years you might not even need a sales force or at least you can shrink your ranks. I read an article recently stating that 95 % of the sales force will be replaced by robots. Artificial Intelligence (AI) has advanced to the point where perception and cognition are human-like. AI claims that robots will be faster than humans at solving problems and they can

learn. The suggestion is that sales calls will be reduced to lines of code and the customer will be better for it. Salesforce and IBM were touting these ideas at the 2019 Dreamforce Event. And Microsoft, with their billions being invested in AI will likely leapfrog all of them. But I still got my money on IBM. I respect Arvind Krishna. He is a visionary, and he has integrity. He'll usher AI into the marketplace responsibly. He knows how to sell his ideas and his vision, and he won't be using robots to do it. I'd like to see that Hundred Percent Club!

Digital marketers believe that buyers today know exactly what they want before the sales rep even shows up. That 70 % of the decision has already been made through their own research and investigation. Sure, buyers are more informed today thanks to Google and other resources, but where the hell did these proclaimed marketing experts come up with 70 % anyway? Research? Show me! Besides no one buys anything when they're only 70 % sold. You still need a sales professional to close that gap. Not a robot!

Let's look at the facts regarding the role technology is playing in sales. Most sales reps are sitting in front of a PC faking their job. They're not in front of prospects and customers anymore. So here is where "old school" still works in the field. When I was carrying a bag for IBM, we had no smart phones, laptops, email, power points, or CRM systems. I got along just fine. I was always in front of customers. The amount of useless technical distractions today propagated by massive amounts of ubiquitous data is killing the sales force. There is only so much time. We need to spend it with customers and prospects. Technology, when miss-applied, prevents that. When applied correctly technology is a salesperson's best friend. But no one is teaching them how to use it to increase productivity and generate more sales. This book addresses that issue head on!

Then there's the cry baby. I can't get in. Nobody answers the phone. I don't have the right email address. Marketing never generates qualified leads. The quotas are unrealistic. The prices are too high. My territory is too small. The competition has a better product. Sound familiar? Get rid of them! If they don't believe in themselves, the company, your products and services, the opportunity, and their future ... then why in the world would you keep them around. Yet, I watch sales managers living with this every day.

Okay, I'm done venting. Let's move on.

My sales career started with IBM in 1974. I know what you're thinking. He's a dinosaur. Not so fast. IBM was the embodiment of solution selling long before someone else came along and branded it. Stay with me now so I can make my point. Their sales training methodology and their structured selling approach created the greatest sales force on earth which has never been repeated since by anyone, including the current IBM, sad to say. And Ginny Rometty, IBM's former CEO, over a couple beers, will likely admit this is true. She remembers – she was a Breakaway!

Let me be very specific.

I was a new sales recruit in 1974, fresh out of Ohio University with a Business Degree. My brother-in-law, Alex Strazzanti was a super star sales manager for IBM at that time and got me an interview with Lynn Lynch who was the Branch Manager for the Chicago General Systems Division (GSD). In those days the big three divisions were the Data Processing Division (DPD), selling huge mainframes, the Office Products Division (OPD), selling a suite of office equipment and (GSD), selling small business computers. Since I was a teenager, I wanted to be an IBM salesman. I wanted to be just like Alex. I loved his blue

suits, his white oxford cloth shirts, his striped ties, and his forty-pound wing-tip shoes. I was hired on June 7, 1974, by GSD. At age twenty-two I was on a career trajectory that I never could have imagined.

Back then an IBM sales recruit trained for one year before receiving a territory. You heard me – one year. And that's if you passed sales school which was fifteen straight days of grueling role play - all filmed, critiqued, and graded. If you didn't score at least 75 % in sales school, you didn't receive a territory. We were terrified, but boy were we ready. IBM knew how to get you mentally tough. Let me take you through IBM's training process, which by the way, is needed today more than ever before.

The first week on the job I was introduced to all the sales managers and about a half dozen of the senior sales reps. My manager gave me a brief description of what I now call the **structured sales cycle**. This was the required approach for selling at IBM and it was non-negotiable. I started training with a dictating machine offered by OPD. They wanted to break us in with a simple product, so we could concentrate on learning the sales structure first. I was required to make five role play calls to managers and sales reps in my first week. What a mess I made of that! I had no clue what I was doing. IBM had a solution selling process that was sophisticated, comprehensive, highly professional, admired by the customer, and feared by competition. My second week I was on an airplane heading for Endicott, NY to begin my sales training journey.

The instructors were superstar sales reps that had earned their first promotion. They were fresh out of the field and determined to create new producers. That was how they earned their next promotion to Marketing Manager. Their job was to pound the IBM sales philosophy into our heads for a year. It

didn't matter if you were a young college recruit or an experienced veteran from another company. They started all of us at ground zero.

The first school was called A Mod. In A Mod we never talked about selling, we never talked about computers, or running a territory. We never spoke of the selling process. They taught us what was the equivalent of a degree in accounting and business workflow. In other words, for six weeks we learned how a business works. We learned debits and credits, how to create and interpret a Balance Sheet and a Profit and Loss Statement. They pinned us to every conceivable business process within a company such as billing, inventory control, accounts receivable, sales analysis, general ledger, accounts payable and payroll. Then we learned about manufacturing, distribution, logistics, and supply chain. They used a fictitious company called The Ideal Milk Bucket Company – so we could eventually learn how to sell them their first computer. Never once throughout all of my college years had I been so enormously challenged. The tests were brutal, and the stakes were high. By the grace of God, I passed A Mod.

After A Mod we headed back to the branch for six weeks. During that time, I was assigned to three different sales reps. I was their servant. I did everything for them in return for their personal guidance and mentoring in the field. I built proposals, I wrote sales letters, I made copies, I created flip charts (power point didn't exist), I researched companies, I created maps, I set up demo's, whatever they needed, I did. This complete immersion combined with shadowing their sales calls put me on a fast track and a furious learning curve. With A Mod under my belt the field calls really started making sense. The conversations in the car afterwards provided some of the best guidance overall. After six weeks in the field, I was off to B Mod.

B Mod was called Application School. This was the equivalent to a master's degree in systems engineering and business processes. We now studied how the automation of an accounting system created lasting value and return on investment. The instructors once again pinned us to every conceivable business transaction within the Ideal Milk Bucket Company. They taught us how to find waste, and bottlenecks, mistakes and inaccuracies, repetitive entries, and duplication of effort. We were forced to see all of this because we walked through the actual processes. There was a huge aha effect. We now knew what the problems were that the company faced, and we knew how and where to find them. We just didn't know how to solve them yet. Finally, in B Mod we were introduced to the structured sales cycle. In other words, we learned exactly what needs to happen in a sales call. We spent hours practicing this with live role plays which at first were pretty messy. We also learned the IBM sales process which they called the "three-call close". The idea is if you execute every call flawlessly you can close every deal with three calls. It worked!

After B Mod I was back to the branch office for another six weeks. This time we focused on prospecting. I had never done this before, and I had no clue what to do. The veteran reps took us into the field, showed us how it was done, and allowed us to practice in their territory. Again, the stakes were high. We were firing real bullets this time. The last thing I wanted to do was to screw up one of their prospects. I made prospecting calls every day for six weeks. Once again – total immersion. I was exhausted! So now I was off to C Mod which was called Computer School or a degree in Systems Engineering.

In C Mod we learned how to flow chart a manual process in accordance with the business workflow sequence and points of integration. Then we converted the optimal flow sequence, so it was ready for programming. Next, they taught us how

to program the IBM System/3 using the RPGII programming language. Yep, we wrote the programs, compiled, and debugged them, tested them, wrote the procedures, and created an operations control book and training manual for every application. I thought I would have a nervous breakdown. We worked in teams of four and we competed with five other teams in our class. Last place was still a passing grade, but it hurt your overall score. My team came in third, I was thrilled. If that wasn't enough, parallel with programming and design, we prepared and delivered at least one role play sales call every day during the six weeks. All of them were videotaped, coached, and graded. Slowly and meticulously the deep understanding of structured selling began to take root. Once on quota, IBM expected us to prospect effectively and fill the sales funnel, qualify the account, conduct a deep survey of their requirements, design and propose a solution, demo the computer equipment, articulate the implementation and customer training process, write proposals, make presentations, provide financial justification, overcome objections, influence the decision makers, and close the deal ideally in no more than three calls. Wow! That's a lot! After C Mod we were nearly done. All we had left was Sales School which terrified me. What I forgot to mention earlier is that each sales trainee was ranked, and the ranking was posted on the wall for the whole world to see. Out of thirty trainees I was ranked seventh after C Mod.

At this point your branch manager gets pretty involved with your final days of training. So, Lynn Lynch pulled me into his office. I'll never forget the conversation. He said, "Mike, the Chicago branch office has finished in the top three in the country for the last ten years. Our sales recruits have always finished in the top three in sales school. You are going to finish your sales training in the top three. So, we need to get you ready. You have three weeks to prepare. Once

you've completed sales school, we will have a territory ready for you. And remember, you will finish in the top three."

So now it was show time – Sales School. I was trembling. Each day for three weeks (weekends off) we made five role play calls per day. All filmed, critiqued, and graded. The leader board was updated daily so you knew where you stood always. Most of the calls were planned, meaning we had a chance to create a strategy ahead of time. Except for the final week which was the Gauntlet. Every day you made five calls, but you found out what the situation was only fifteen minutes before making the call. The instructors picked the industry, the situation, who you were calling on, and provided a few clues about the company. All of this was typed on a three by five card. Each call had a specific outcome that the instructor expected us to uncover. Our job was to find it. This was a pass/fail grade. You either got the deal done or you didn't.

I finished fourth in sales school. Lynn Lynch was very proud of me, and I received much praise for my efforts. He said, "I wanted you to learn how to cope with the pressure." I carried a bag for IBM for five years. I was Rookie of the Year in 1975 at 212% of quota, led the nation in new accounts in 1977, and made five Hundred Percent Clubs and two Golden Circles (top 1 %) during that time. But more important than the awards, I had received a sales education that laid the foundation for my entire career. And let me point out that I am not a Rhodes Scholar or Nobel Laureate.

I had never found a training experience like this since. Which is why I personally trained all of my own sales reps for my three companies. I trusted their development to no one. I knew what needed to be done to build a Breakaway Sales Performer. My first company, Computer Options, which I founded in 1980, grew from nothing to \$ 26 million in sales in the first five years and was ranked

number 149 on the INC. 500 list in its first year of eligibility. A few years later the company reached \$ 65 million. My second company, Maintenance Innovators was ranked by City Business Magazine as the second fastest growing company in the state of Minnesota. My third company, North Central Consulting (NCC) was the grand slam. This was my “lightening in a bottle” IT consulting company which was sold in 1998 creating several millionaires. And I can honestly tell you that I attribute much of my success, (which stands on the shoulders of lots of mistakes), to IBM. They knew how to mold superstars. They knew how to take an ordinary person with big dreams and get extraordinary results.

Today, most companies hire the wrong people because they don’t know how to find the right ones, they give them a little product training, put them through a few role plays, slap a quota on them, throw them into a territory, and then wonder why they aren’t getting results. You know it’s true, too. No one wants to make the investment. No one wants to take the risk. Which is ironic given the fact that they burn through piles of cash with sales turnover while at the same time ruining their culture. Your sales force is your lifeblood if they’re good. Short of that they are serious liability. Your competition will eat your lunch. And they don’t have to be that good to do it. Let’s change that ... forever!

For twenty years I have been teaching sales reps how to master their job. My clients have flourished, and the sales reps are achieving financial freedom that they had only dreamed about. All this started out as a hobby helping my friends with their businesses. After two years, I flunked early retirement, and started Endurance America, my sales training and management consulting company. I have trained over 30,000 sales reps in the classroom and have facilitated over 200 strategic planning sessions. Five years ago, I started Mike Kerrison International,

and I converted my classroom offerings to a robust on-line digital experience at a fraction of the classroom price. Now everyone can afford this education.

My model is called **Breakaway Sales** which is built around four secrets that must be mastered. Breakaway Sales is an amalgamation of my forty years of selling and running companies. And I carry into each relationship the same intensity that IBM had brought to me all those years ago. These are the four secrets that all sales super stars have in common.

This book will spoon feed each step of the Breakaway Sales Model and provide practical proven examples that you can relate to. There is an entire section just for sales managers that will assist them with building Breakaway Sales Performers. This section also carries a comprehensive toolkit to help each manager with the developmental process.

Having been a CEO myself for many years, this book provides each CEO with my field tested and proven Breakaway Strategy tools which will pair well with Breakaway Sales to help you fully align and integrate the sales plan with the business plan, which is crucial to your success! My strategy model has been successfully implemented within hundreds of my clients. Put it all together, and you have a Breakaway Company.

That is what this book will teach you! Thanks for letting me vent!