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Contact: Gail Rubin
505-265-7215, grpr@flash.net

WHEN MARKET DIVES, SMOOTH THE RIDE WITH PROVEN SELLING SKILLS

Albuquerque, NM – During the current downturn in the economy, it is possible to smooth out the bumpy ride with state-of-the-art sales skills, according to sales and marketing consultant Lenann McGookey Gardner.

“When the economy turns sour, it’s more important than ever to keep sales solid. But buyers are increasingly suspicious of sellers’ motives, so you have to keep your selling skills up-to-date to deal with that and see yourself through the tough times,” says Gardner, author of *Got Sales? The Complete Guide to Today’s Proven Methods for Selling Services* (Jarndyce & Jarndyce). Her top suggestions for selling in a weak economy include these proven strategies:

Be proactive and reach out to past clients

“A lot of people are just answering the phone and taking work that comes their way, but seldom do they make an effort to reach out, even to past clients, to see if there is any way they might be helpful to those folks now,” says Gardner. “Most past clients will respond well to an ‘I was thinking of you, so I picked up the phone’ type of message, even if you have to leave it on a voicemail – it’s best, of course, if you also mention some specific concern or issue of theirs that you have been thinking about. Initiate those calls!”

Network selectively

“Not all networking venues will be productive for you, so track the results you get from various meetings, and return to those that have yielded the most productive prospects,” says Gardner. “You want to be able to connect with people who can spend money for what you have to sell – or at the very least people who, when impressed with you, can set

up you up with a meeting with someone who can buy what you have to sell -- and you need to determine which forums best provide access to such people.”

Meet and talk to new people

“As you meet new folks, you may discover some are actively looking for the service you provide, others are not actively looking but they have ‘latent pain’ in the area where you provide pain relief. As you converse, draw that latent pain to the surface, then you can suggest ways you may be able to help,” says Gardner.

Spend face or phone time on sales

“We know that time spent face-to-face or phone-to-phone (F2F and P2P) with those who can spend money for what you have to sell correlates directly with closed business. So, keep track of the minutes you spend in such activities and start by making it an absolute minimum of five percent of your working hours, even if you are a person who both delivers services and sells. Full time salespeople should look at the percentage of their working hours spent F2F and P2P – it’s always smaller than they think – and simply drive that number up!” says Gardner. “Remember, there is no data about a correlation between email-to-email time and closed business.”

Lenann McGookey Gardner, a Harvard MBA and a past #1 sales rep at Xerox, offers keynote speeches on state-of-the-art selling and closing skills and executive and sales coaching for business success. Her book *Got Sales?* is the one guidebook highlighting all the latest research and data on what’s working now in contemporary selling. More information is available at www.YouCanSell.com.

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