

# the tipping point

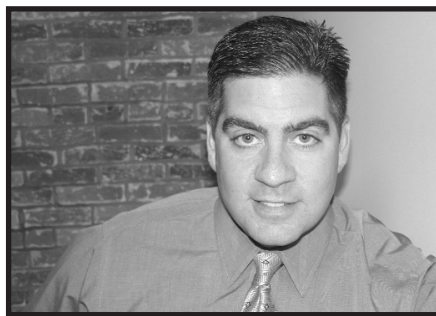
## THE KEY TO FASTER RESULTS

Often, when it comes to selling there is usually one concentrated activity that you execute which can create a majority of your results. This activity is known as your “Tipping Point.” It is the activity that is most important for getting results. For those of you who have followed this column in the past, the Tipping Point concept can be explained within the context of the Pareto Principle (the 80/20 Rule). Your Tipping Point is the 20 percent of activity that can create 80 percent of your results. Finding your Tipping Point in selling can be the key to faster results.

So what is your Tipping Point? The first step is figuring out what doesn't work. Assess all of the daily activities you do and determine which are not working for you. Stop doing them and start trying new things. Most importantly never let perfect ruin good. Everyone wants perfection, but sometimes striving for perfection actually becomes the activity and will slow you down. If you have a “very good” draft of that proposal which needs to be sent out, then send it. You don't have to spend four more hours trying to make it perfect. If you accept this philosophy, you are on your way to finding your Tipping Point.

Let's dig a little deeper into this topic. In Malcolm Gladwell's 2002 national best selling book, *The Tipping Point* there is a great story which illustrates the Tipping Point concept. In 1990 the subway system in New York City [NYC] was a breeding ground for violent crime. With felonies at an all time high, NYC hired a new chief of transit police, William Bratton, to turn things around. The first thing that Bratton decided to crack down on was fare-beating. An estimated 170,000 people a day were riding the subway everyday without paying fare. The problem was exacerbated by the fact fare-beating was not easy to fight. Because there was only \$1.25 at stake, the

transit police didn't feel it was worth their time to pursue it, particularly when there were more serious crimes such as rape and murder occurring. That all changed when Bratton took over. The cops then started to bust fare-beaters one by one, handcuff them, and leave them standing



Jason Pappas

in a “chain gang” on the platform until they had a full catch. The idea was to send a signal to the public that the transit police were serious about cracking down on fare-beaters. Bratton also insisted that a background check be run on all of those arrested. It turned out that one out of seven arrestees had an outstanding warrant for a previous crime, and one out of twenty was carrying a weapon of some sort. After awhile, the bad guys wised up and began to leave their weapons at home and pay their fares. Arrests for misdemeanors, the things that had gone unnoticed before, went up fivefold between 1990-1994. Bratton had turned the transit police into an organization focused on the smallest misdemeanor infractions yet the felony violent crime rate dropped significantly. So why did Bratton take this approach? Because the minor and insignificant crimes were the Tipping Points for violent crime. Bratton believed that the epidemic of violent crime could

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2400 Boston Street, Suite 330, Baltimore, MD 21224  
Phone: 410-342-9510 Fax: 410-342-9514  
www.smartceo.com

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be reversed or “tipped” by dealing with the smallest details of crime, misdemeanors. He was right.

Some examples of Tipping Points for sales professionals that I have come across are: being out of the office from 10 to 4 daily, making 50 cold calls a day or simply journaling. These activities seem simple and frivolous, but just as cracking down on the fare-beaters tipped the violent crime rate in NYC, these activities for certain sales professionals tipped the results for selling success. The key to the Tipping Point concept is to use it. Once you find your Tipping Point, commit to doing it on a daily basis, no matter what. Make it a daily priority, even if it is the only thing that you can get done.

Now, it's time to find your Tipping Point to becoming a great sales professional. First, grab a piece of paper and go to a quiet place. Write down EVERY activity you do in a typical week that is related to sales. Decide what are the most effective activities that you do. Pick ONE and try it as your Tipping Point. This means that you commit to doing it daily for three weeks. Why three weeks? Because research has proven that it takes three weeks to develop a habit. If the activity you chose drives your sales performance, it indeed is your Tipping Point. If not, pick another activity and start the process over. Keep going until you find your Tipping Point. Once you've found it, make it a habit for life!

Jason Pappas is the CEO and co-founder of EntreQuest, a Baltimore-based sales development firm focused on driving profitability and productivity of companies.