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# Recessionproof your sales

Today, my post [Recession Proof Your Sales](#) was published at GetEntrepreneurial. If you have a moment, please head over there to take a look. If you are GetEntrepreneurial readers, welcome to [Wealth and Wisdom](#). Please take a few minutes and look around.

### **A tale of two companies**

The contrast couldn't be sharper.

Company T had lost its direction and was sinking fast. Where sales were once \$18M, they ultimately plunged to less than \$6M. Where they once set the standard in their industry for customer service, now they were the joke of the town.

Company C was a different breed. It had always been the small respected underdog. At \$6M it was a third of company T's size. Where everyone else in the industry had lost over half their business, they were holding fast and had doubled their customer base. They were poised to exit the recession as a dominant player.

Why was company C thriving in the recession while company T (and the rest of the industry) foundered? They had a strong sales focus. They seized the chance to grow market share. They saw the opportunity to eliminate several bottom feeders that constantly drug down prices.

### **7 Keys to selling during a recession**

1. **Go back to basics**When things start spinning out of control it is time to reevaluate. What does a good coach work on when his team is slumping? He goes back to basics.It isn't exciting, but think back to your early days when you were learning sales.Take a deep breath, step back, and look at sales 101.
2. **Focus on the customer**Business starts and ends with your customer. Identify *his* needs. This becomes the basis for your products/services. No, that doesn't mean you give away the store. It just means that every aspect of your business needs to support your customer. Anything else is a waste of time and money.Most businesses focus on their systems and expense control. Their criteria for all decisions is making their own jobs easier. Guess what...the customer doesn't care!
3. **Focus on your niche**This is not the time to try new techniques, find new markets, or launch new products. That is a desperate act that just wastes your time and money. If anything you should actually focus your resources on your top products, services, and markets. Remember, jack of all trades, master of none.Take a minute and define your focus. What is your niche market? What are their needs? What are you doing now to service them? What could you do better? How can you dominate your niche and grow your market share?
4. **Increase your sales budget**Contrary to what your operations manager says you can't cut your way to a profit. Business starts and ends with the customer. Yes you need to tighten your belt. Expense control is important. Just be smart where you spend your money. Ask the question "will it grow my business?"Increase your sales expense budget. Spend more on strategic lunches. Give your top salesman a bonus. Reward your sales support team. Thank your top customers for their loyalty and send them a gift.Compare this to what your competition is doing. Right now they are reigning in their salesman. In fact, they probably just fired a few! You stand out and can take market share if you are smart.
5. **Dump the deadbeats**Fire the bottom 20% of your customers. I can hear the screaming now. "We can't afford to lose any more business." This is bunk. These customers take 80% of your time for 20% of the income. Cut them loose and spend your resources on customers you can satisfy!
6. **Guard your customer base**Right now everyone is hungry. They are eying your customers like a starving wolf eyes a young lamb. Take care of your customer. Give them such value and service that they wouldn't dream of going elsewhere. Build deep relationships with the key decision makers-remember that the buying decision is emotional. Logic is used to justify the decision.Make a list you your customers and rank them. Focus your time and energy on your stars.
7. **Branch out to new accounts**The flip side of guarding your customers is to go on the attack. Remember that your competition is cutting back on spending. They have let a few salesmen go. The remaining salesmen are overloaded and overworked.Make a customer wish list. Look at the competition and identify their top customers to target.

You can also find this article published on [Recessionproof your sales](#), and on the tag pages [Entrepreneurship](#).