

It's not just professional athletes that are subject to a *Slump* in performance, its in professional selling as well. The question is, what to do about it when it happens. This article outlines 3 exacting steps for moving through a perceived *Slump* in selling performance from a full commission salesperson who's been there.



# Breaking out of a sales performance slump

*The crushing reality of high  
performance selling*

Dialexis

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## "BREAKING OUT OF A SALES PERFORMANCE SLUMP"

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It happens every now and then. Top salespeople are making amazing headway, earning substantial income, buying homes, hot cars, expensive this and expensive that. The posting of the top ranking salespeople in the company authenticates that they are the best. Their confidence is massive; their deal-making seems endless. It's an *ego rush* like few salespeople ever experience. They become filled with promise and an unconsciousness that their hot streak will never end. Money flows like a fast river and many top salespeople believe the reason they're making money is simple – they're just good. Living on \$50,000 a year becomes impossible; the cash flow needed to sustain a high performance lifestyle is now 5 times that. The pressure only drives them harder; they get smarter and ratchet up their intensity. They find ways to *get a sale*, often just in time to keep the music playing. Then, something happens that is totally unexpected, they lose a sale, not any sale, a big one. It's a complete shock because the transaction looked beyond solid. It was clearly in the bag; the family vacation was being arranged, congrats were being extended by the sales manager and other salespeople, but the transaction died.

The emotional crush is deep, but not for long; they shake it off because the big debt service is always out there, they don't have time to stay down. Soon after, another deal falls and two others they were counting on get put on hold due to unplanned circumstances by the client. Suddenly, the salesperson is looking at a weak pipeline. Its gut wrenching, but they *think* their way out of the negativity and forge on. Despite a high intensity push, it seems they just can't get traction, some small sales are making, but it's not enough to feed the wolf, they have to have the *power hits* to keep the machine going – and their ego. A slow month turns into a slow quarter and then another quarter, until it's obvious. They're in a slump.

The salesperson does what they have always done and what has always worked before, they *get on it* big time! They put in more hours, think deeper, re-analyze their strategy, protect their time, but nothing seems to be working; frustration builds and confidence begins to drain. They ask themselves.... "*What's going on here, what happened?*" Confidence is slowly replaced by humility. It gets scary.

This is a daunting scenario, but a reality for any salesperson that's been in high performance selling a decade or two. So, what can be done, how does a salesperson get out of a *performance slump*, what steps can they take to get back to home runs? Here are a few thoughts:

### 1. SLOW DOWN, BREATH....BALANCE

Don't get crazy, get centered – stay calm. Back away for a moment and look at what the scene is. Get organized... remove the clutter. Realize that panic won't solve the problem; it won't add to your clarity or generate a solution. Calmness is the key; it allows you to *think* rationally. Take a breath.....take another breath, go sit under a tree and regroup.

## 2. REALIZE THAT YOUR INTERPRETATIONS DELIVER YOUR RESULTS

You think you are in a *slump*, **but are you?** Although it may seem to be a reality, the whole thing about losing a deal or two is simply a **neutral event**. The concept of being in a '*slump*' is just something that you deem to be happening, but what's happening **has no meaning** until you *interpret* the event by calling it a *slump*! And, since you named the 'event' a *slump* and then applied an *interpretation* of what a *slump* is, you begin to manifest that interpretation. So, if you're interpretation of '*slump*' is, *I can't get business or deals are dying* and everything is just *falling apart*, then that's what you will continue to generate. The *story* you make up about the **event** (lost deals) and what it means to your production is what you will *generate* going forward. In effect, if you make up a *story* that you can't seem to '*get a deal*' then you won't. If you make up a *story* that *you can find business* then you will.

## 3. REWRITE YOUR STORY

Begin by going back to the event, the moment when you lost the 'big sale. Simply stated; *you lost a sale or two* that's it, nothing more nothing less. Just say to yourself....a transaction was lost...period. Now realize that the lost transaction is simply a **neutral event**, **it has no meaning** in itself, it's just a beginning space that is without meaning. Next you get to interpret that event, you get to *assign meaning* and the interpretations you assign can be endless. For example, let's consider some of the possible interpretations you might create:

- "I lost a big deal and now I'm going to have a lousy year."
- "I was betrayed by the client, I shouldn't trust anyone."
- "I'm off my game, I took my eye off the ball and now my reputation is compromised."
- "The deal simply slipped away, but all sales die 3 times so it's going to come back."
- "I'm in a slump."
- + one million more....

Recognize that there are an endless number of interpretations you can generate, perhaps millions! Since there are endless interpretations you can create which one's do you think are right, wrong, good, or bad. You will soon realize that none of the interpretations are right, wrong, good, bad, they are just interpretations created from a neutral event! As a result, we call interpretations 'your story.'

But here is the big point; because you are the 'interpreter' you will believe that YOUR interpretation is RIGHT! Others may have a different interpretation of the same event, but you will end up believing yours is the correct interpretation since you are vested in being RIGHT!

Now that you have what you will refer to as "the truth," you will go forward seeking evidence to prove your story is true! For example; if you create a story that you are in a *slump*, then you will only find opportunities that ultimately fail so you can be RIGHT ABOUT YOUR STORY that you are in a SLUMP!

So what's the answer? It's actually very simple; you get to **create a new story from the event!** If you have lost a few transactions recently, what new story can you create about that "neutral event" that supports you moving forward? Not like the *new story* is the right *story*, but it's one that supports you rather than has a negative payoff.

***"Top performers don't drown when they think they are in a slump they create a new story!"***

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Dialexis is a Company located in Southern California focused on increasing individual sales performance