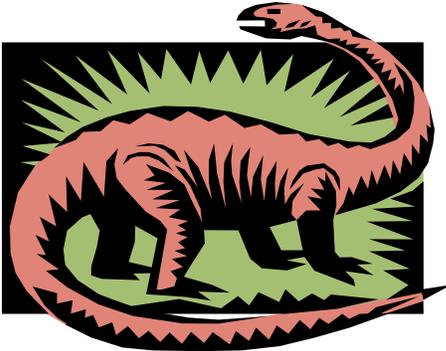


## Sales Rep Confidential: Are You A Dinosaur?

By Walter McDonald, President, The McDonald Group, Inc.



### Are You In Jeopardy?

Does your Dealer Executive have the perception that *you are the weakest link* between his Dealership and profitable new business?

Are you in danger of being seen as a dinosaur by your company owner? Are you in danger of being replaced by a more cost-effective sales process? Check yourself out...

Unless you've spent the last year on another planet, you must know that many Dealer Principals are extremely unhappy with their current sales organizations. A company owner just told me, quote, "These guys are fat, dumb and happy. They simply have not adjusted to the new market realities. They are waiting for the phone to ring, expecting us to provide them leads, which, they may or may not follow-up."

Another Dealer Executive says, "My reps have become too complacent, lethargic and unwilling to take the steps we need to get profitable business in today's market. Because they are not asking the essential diagnostic questions, prospects see them as arrogant. And, because they are not covering their existing accounts, customers are complaining that we are taking their business for granted." The Dealers I talk to are seriously considering alternatives to high-cost, low-performance machinery sales organizations.

### Quickie Self Test.

You must be entirely honest. Answer truthfully **Yes** or **No** to each of these questions.

- |  | YES                      | NO                       |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Do I follow-up immediately on sales leads, talking to the prospect within no more than four hours after his first contact with the dealership?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Am I following a disciplined A-B-C account contact plan with all current users of our primary lines in my sales territory?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Do I have an effective way to track my "deal visibility," the percentage of deals in which I participate in my territory?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. As part of my "deal visibility" improvement effort, do I complete factual "lost sales reports," asking the prospect, "Other than price, why did you chose to go with ___ on this purchase?" | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Do I prepare useful, timely field contact reports to management, informing them of competitive activity, customer perceptions and market opportunities?                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Am I making regular calls on job sites in my territory to prospect for short-term rentals as well as machinery sales opportunities?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. Am I sufficiently able to overcome "call reluctance" and commit at least 20% of my time each week prospecting for new, never-before accounts?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**Sales Rep Confidential: Are You A Dinosaur? (cont.)**

- |  | <b>YES</b>               | <b>NO</b>                |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 8. Do I have a fairly accurate knowledge of how many cold calls, sales appointments, account visits, telephone prospecting calls and promotional mailings I need each week to keep my sales lead pipeline filled so that I can achieve at least a 70% deal visibility rate?                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. Am I actively pursuing short-term rentals as “paid demos” instead of providing prospects free loaners to test out our machines.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. Have I developed and utilize a meaningful set of diagnostic questions to ask prospective accounts about their application, current problems, operating costs and equipment payback issues?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11. Do I make certain that I ask a sufficient number of diagnostic questions to ensure that the customer purchases the right equipment for the job?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 12. Do I work hard to avoid looking like an alligator to a prospect, i.e, small ears, small eyes and a big mouth?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 13. Am I capitalizing on accessory sales to current and prospective customers, i.e., am I achieving a monthly accessory sales quota?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 14. Am I an effective “team player” in the dealership, being alert for cross-selling opportunities for aftermarket product support whenever possible?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 15. Do I spend a sufficient amount of time each week updating my computerized mailing list?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 16. Have I established a formal marketing program to promote new products and attachments through at least 20 targeted account mailings each week?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 17. Am I properly identifying and prospecting industry accounts that have <i>never before</i> purchased equipment from our dealership?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 18. Have I been able to break through feelings of complacency or fatigue, found new sources of energy and enthusiasm and work hard to maintain a level of professionalism essential to long-term success in the business?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 19. Do I systematically ask each customer for one or two referrals at the time of sale or equipment installation and do I promptly pursue these referrals, providing the original customer timely feedback on my progress or success?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 20. Am I utilizing true “walk around” demonstrations as a sales tool to keep my presentation skills sharp and persuasive?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 21. Am I investing the time to locate, operate and study at least two competitive units in the field every six months to remain current and accurate on my competitive comparisons?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 22. Do I fully utilize the dealership’s contact management software as well as product support resources to successfully promote the business?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 23. Am I actively prospecting members of key trade associations in my territory?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 24. Am I utilizing my contact management software to schedule appointments, organize calls in distant counties or ZIP codes, follow-up on units coming off lease, following up on units that are up for replacement based on the account’s replacement cycle (hours, utilization, maintenance cost, etc.)? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**Sales Rep Confidential: Are You A Dinosaur? (cont.)**

**YES NO**

25. Am I monitoring my *sales absorption rate*, making absolutely certain that the dealership's total cost of supporting me in the territory (wages, commissions, benefits, car, cell phone, travel, entertainment, promo expenses, etc.) are covered at least 125% from the gross profit I generate from my overall sales activities?

Total NO Score \_\_\_\_\_

**Scoring:**

**If your total NO  
Dinosaur  
Score Is**

**Consider These Remedial Actions:**

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Over 20	Immediately review your score with your Dealer Principal. Discuss the "No" issues and mutually select high-priority areas for immediate improvement. Or, find another job.
16 - 20	Present a personal Action Plan for Improvement to your Dealer Principal. Get his "buy in" on your Self-improvement efforts.
7 - 15	If you have been truthful in the self-assessment, you are doing OK, but improvement in selected areas would greatly increase your sales performance. Pick one or two areas to strengthen each month.
Under 7	Keep up the good work. Seek continuous improvement. Offer to become a "mentor" to assist new or lower performing reps in your company. E-mail me your success stories. Good luck!

Please call me if you would like to discuss any aspect of this assessment exercise. Many sales reps already have the knowledge of what to do. So, there may be some confusion or lack of communications between you and your Dealer Principal about priorities. What are his or her expectations of you? Are you seriously responding to his or her concerns? If not, this is probably a good time for an open discussion about your performance and your future with this dealership. Avoid extinction. Don't become a Dinosaur in your territory!

**NOTE:** If you are a Sales Manager or Dealer Principal, you should consider sponsoring my *Executive Sales and Sales Management Workshop* as an in-company training program. We will focus on your rep's weakest areas and provide them a consistent "behavioral modification" training program with extensive follow-up and skills implementation support. Just call me for a comprehensive course catalog of all of our dealer development resources and employee development training programs.

Walter McDonald is President of The McDonald Group, Inc. and has conducted over 2,650 workshops and seminars in the equipment industry. His *Institute for Dealer Development* offers management education programs for Dealer Principals, General Managers, Branch Managers, Sales and Product Support Managers, Service and Parts Managers, and Machinery and Product Support Sales Professionals. He is a frequent contributor to several dealer trade magazines. Contact Walter for a complete schedule of upcoming workshops. You may reach Walter at 847/340-5518 or [Walt@McDonaldGroupInc.com](mailto:Walt@McDonaldGroupInc.com).

**THE McDONALD GROUP, INC.**

U.S. Mail Reply: Box 730, Arlington Heights, IL 60006 Tel: 847/340-5518  
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