

# Summertime

By Michael T. Ferris



**W**hat a great time to enjoy outdoor activities, and spend time with loved ones. It's also a time to reflect on your business, making any adjustments to guarantee a strong showing at year end. Many companies now make New Year's resolutions. Aside from dusting those off and recommitting to making them happen, how about adding a Labor Day resolution?

In honor of the season, I decided to

illustrate the resolutions that work for my most successful clients through their analogous activities.

## Fishing

Fishing is timeless; it is very much like marketing home health and hospice. It requires patience, strategy, experience, expertise, and tenacity. Just as in sales, you have to know what fish want and where to find them. There are professional fishing

tournaments with sponsorships and television coverage. What makes a professional fisherman a champion? Preparation, proper equipment, and the ability to adapt differentiate the pros from the rest of us. Time on the water equals more fish caught, just as time in front of referral sources equals more referrals.

## Golf

Here, success is dependent upon two big elements—practice and mental preparation. Great golfers hit practice balls at every opportunity. Tiger hits countless practice balls

a day. He is on the practice range before and after a round. He has burned the swing for every shot into his mind. Home care and hospice sales teams should be practicing every day. Flying by the seat of your pants doesn't work in golf, and it certainly doesn't work in selling. Role playing is essential to peak performance. Knowing what you will say in each circumstance is the key to winning the game.

## Hiking

When you set off into the woods, you had better have a plan in advance. You need a trail map and a route. Your pack must contain everything that you will need while in the woods. This same level of planning is required to be effective in sales. Goals as well as account and territory management are the map. What is in your folder, briefcase, and trunk of the car is the equivalent of the backpack. Make sure you have everything you need to be effective. In sales as it is in hiking, take one step at a time; you'll achieve your goals and have a nice journey! Focus not on the goal, rather on each step necessary to achieve it.

Enjoy these relaxing summer moments, and with a clear mind, challenge yourself and your organization to exceed your goals and fulfill your vision. Above all, be passionate.

## The More Things Change...

Some things don't change. John Henry Patterson, founder of National Cash Register (NCR), is believed by many to be the father of sales training. This happened because he visited the NCR exposition at the 1893 Chicago World's Fair, and found that when

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he quizzed his sales people, they did not know how to sell the products. In 1894, he held the first sales training school, and NCR became a leader in the cash register business. Much of this success is attributed to the sales team. Fast forward to modern times and you will find that the most successful organizations have regular sales training for all its sales people.

### **Sales Manager's Corner:**

Each month, I address one issue or answer one question dealing with sales management issues. Feel free to submit questions to [cat@nahc.org](mailto:cat@nahc.org). This month's issue is a question I receive frequently: "How do I keep my sales team focused on building their account base once they have tasted success?"

First, don't let them forget how they got to their first taste of success. The same hard work, organization, planning, and passion that got them there, will carry them to the next level. The key to continued success is being smarter

about how and where they spend their most precious asset . . . their time. Rating accounts, knowing what is important to them, prioritizing time, and protecting key relationships will enable the sales person to achieve highest levels of productivity. Support top performers with additional training. Our tendency as sales managers is to focus on "fixing" low performers, and neglect dedicating time to the top tier. A good sales manager has a plan to help the whole team, all of the time.

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**About the Author:** *Michael T. Ferris is Managing Principal, Home Care Marketing Solutions, Chapel Hill, NC. Author of: "How To: Market and Deliver Legendary Service," "Managing Home Care Sales Teams for Legendary Results," "101 Home Care Promotional Strategies," and "The Complete Guide to Home Care Sales & Marketing for Legendary Results." NAHC Members receive a 15% discount on these publications. Mike may be contacted at [mike@hcmarketingsolutions.com](mailto:mike@hcmarketingsolutions.com). Sign up for his free home care and hospice sales and marketing newsletter at [www.hcmarketingsolutions.com](http://www.hcmarketingsolutions.com).*