

Top 10 Sales Books of All Time

By Geoffrey James | September 27, 2011

Amazon.com currently lists 270,902 books with “Sales” in the title. That’s a heck of a lot of reading, especially for somebody who has to go out and sell for a living. With that in mind, I thought I’d list out the ten books which I believe should be in every sales professional’s library. Here are the sales books (and sales thinkers) that have most heavily influenced my thinking on the subject:

- **The Seven Keys to Effective Business-to-Business Appointment Setting** by Andrea Sittig-Rolf (Thomson/Aspatore Inc., 2006). *Why:* Getting the first appointment is still the most difficult part of selling and this is a perfect guide for those who must run the gauntlet.
- **Better PowerPoint** by Stephen M. Kosslyn (Oxford University Press, 2011). *Why:* Kosslyn analyzes presentations using the latest science on perception.
- **Mastering the Complex Sale** by Jeff Thull (Wiley, 2010). *Why:* Thull is a “big thinker” with a broad perspective about how complex sales go through different stages.
- **No More Cold Calling** by Joanne Black (Business Plus, 2006). *Why:* Joanne is THE expert on using your social and business network to build up your client base.
- **Perfect Selling** by Linda Richardson (McGraw-Hill, 2008). *Why:* Linda Richardson understands more about selling than you or I will ever know in 10 lifetimes.
- **Persuasive Business Proposals** by Tom Sant (3rd edition, AMACOM, 2011). *Why:* There’s a reason this is a classic; it explains how win the HUGE contracts that build businesses.
- **The Complete Idiot’s Guide to Cold Calling** by Keith Rosen (Alpha Books, 2004). *Why:* This is simply the most straightforward guide I’ve ever seen to this very challenging part of the sales process.
- **The Funnel Principle** by Mark Sellers (Self-published, 2008). *Why:* Mark opens your thinking about sales pipelines and how to make them work for you rather than against you.
- **The New Solution Selling** by Keith Eades (McGraw-Hill, 2004). *Why:* Keith provides a much needed update to the decades-old concept of solution selling.
- **The Sales Winner’s Handbook** by Wendy Weiss (DFD Publications, 2010). *Why:* In addition to bringing a female perspective to the often macho world of selling, Wendy is all about practical techniques that work from square A.

Geoffrey James has sold and written hundreds of features, articles and columns for national publications including Wired, Men's Health, Business 2.0, SellingPower, Brand World, Computer Gaming World, CIO, The New York Times and (of course) BNET. He is the author of seven books, including Business Wisdom of the Electronic Elite (translated into seven languages and selected by four book clubs), and The Tao of Programming (widely quoted on the Web as a "canonical book of computer humor".) He was also co-host of Funny Business, a program on New England's largest all-talk radio station and has given seminars and keynotes at numerous corporations, including Rackspace, Gartner, Lucent and Houston Industries. Geoffrey attributes his success to the uncommon realization that freelancing is "50 percent sales and 50 percent delivery." When writing about Sales, he draws on his prior experience marketing and selling multi-million dollar computer systems, his daily experience selling his own services, and the fact that every month he's personally being coached, one-on-one, by the world's top sales trainers.