

RxSales: An Expert Performance System™

Hey Mikey, He Likes It!

By Linda Stimac, Author, RxSales: An Expert Performance System

Before the advent of remotes or TIVO, when people dutifully watched advertisements on television, the makers of Life Cereal spent a lot of money to acquaint viewers in the USA with three little boys having breakfast. Two older boys carefully watched their little brother toy with a bowl of a new breakfast cereal. It was obvious that the boy had a reputation for being a very discerning eater. Would he try it? What would he do? They leaned closer, they stared, and one said to the other, in near disbelief, “Hey Mikey, He Likes It!”

Sales professionals who are troubled with an Enlarged Approval Gland say something similar when they return to the office after a sales call. It sounds like this: “Hey, Bill, they loved it!” or, “Nancy, she said that my presentation was the best she’s ever heard. I just know we will get this sale.”

If salespeople become too focused on whether their prospects and clients like them (or, by extension, their presentations), then healthy approval seeking behavior moves into a troublesome realm called Need for Approval. An Enlarged Approval Gland is too much of a good thing. Everyone, including a sales professional, likes approval and appreciation. Applause is good for the soul. But when “I enjoy it” becomes “I must have it,” an addictive-type behavior takes center stage.

The condition makes it difficult for the sales professional to see the reality of many sales situations. A film-like screen separates the professional from the prospective client. If the prospect is not going to make a decision, the salesperson doesn’t realize it. If the sale is going nowhere fast, the salesperson is oblivious. Why? Because, in the salesperson’s mind, it is most important to make a friend.

Unhealthy approval-seeking behavior is deep rooted. Dr. Wayne Dyer, author of Your Erroneous Zones, devotes an entire chapter, called “You Don’t Need Their Approval,” to this topic. According to Dr. Dyer, several factors can foster a heightened need for approval:

1. Our culture reinforces a mindset that advises people to “check it out” with other people before acting. Independent, decisive people are often painted as uncaring and inconsiderate. Song lyrics are filled with approval seeking. Remember “As Long As He Needs Me,” “People Who Need People,” and “I Can’t Live If Living Is Without You”?
2. Parents who withhold approval as a condition of discipline or, conversely, dole it out sparingly, only when a child’s behavior exceeds expectations, can be the source of this condition. At the age of thirty-nine, a well established sales professional can still be trying to get mom or dad’s approval, but now, living vicariously through prospective clients.
3. Institutions (such as higher education) encourage dependent behavior. Want to plan your university curriculum? Make sure your high school guidance counselor approves of your choice because if s(he) does, you might get a scholarship.

When families and culture foster approval seeking, it is not surprising that many people in the sales profession place too much emphasis on what other people think – to the detriment of their own sales performance.

What to do? In our program (RxSales: An Expert Performance System™), the first step is acknowledgement – that the approval gland has indeed become enlarged. This happens when

salespeople receive their lab results (The CheckUp™) and discover this early warning sign. As a prescriptive learning program, the salesperson identifies possible sources in order to better understand the severity of the condition. Finally, self-awareness becomes the best tonic, enabling the sales professional to become more vigilant and shorten their own reaction time. This happens because of an effective web-based learning program and personal coaching.

I was reminded of Mikey the other day when a financial advisor, who completed the RxSales learning program in 1994, wrote me. Today, she is a partner in one of the most successful and profitable investment companies in the western part of the United States. More than ten years ago, when she discovered that she had an Enlarged Approval Gland, she tackled it with a vengeance, along with a short list of other hidden conditions that were inhibiting her performance.

I called her to find out more about her cure a decade later.

I asked: “How did you improve yourself? How did you operate on that enlarged approval gland?”

She replied: “I think the awareness alone was a big part of it. To learn about this problem was a shock to me. And I had to accept the knowledge. Going forward, when prospective clients would tell me that ‘they appreciated the information, thank you,’ I knew that I couldn’t let it deter me from doing what I had to do next. Before that, when I got an Atta Girl, it was enough. Now it wasn’t. I knew I needed to go farther. I needed to help them make decisions.”

I asked: “Your *CheckUp™* experience was several years ago. Fast forward to today. How did your diagnosis and your self-treatment make a difference?”

She replied: “Today I am more focused on helping clients make decisions as opposed to educating them. My experience paid off in production and in the confidence that I can close.”

And then she added: “By the way, Linda, I’m still working on my Approval Factor. It takes a long time to fix that one.”