

# Got Motivati

BY SHELLY RONDEAU HELLER

## Staying Motivated About Sales Is the Key that Unlocks Your Long-Term Success

**L**AST YEAR, WHEN NEWSPAPER headlines were screaming about the plummeting stock market, massive layoffs and business slow-downs, Tom Claiborne, sales manager at GMC Trucks of North Texas in Grapevine, Texas, gathered his troops for a talk. "We cannot afford to participate in any 'recession,'" he told them. "I'll tell you what—you can play golf, but you can't play recession." ● He pointed out that recession is when business drops by ten percent nationally. "Let someone else lose 20 percent of their business," he said. "You lose zero." His team got the message; they rallied, dug in and worked harder. As it turned out, the dealership's profitability was up in 2001 compared to the previous year.

### WANT TO STAY MOTIVATED? USE YOUR HEAD

Why are some people motivated in the midst of adversity while others are paralyzed? "It's entirely mental," Claiborne says. "It's a game we play with ourselves. All you have to do is sell one more truck than you think you can and you're not in a recession. Activity breeds activity. A body in motion tends to stay in motion."

Staying in motion comes naturally to Claiborne, who has sold GM products for 27 years. For the past six years, he's acted as sales manager at GMC Trucks of North Texas, overseeing seven sales consultants who worked together to sell 165 trucks in November 2001.

It can also be hard to stay motivated during periods of rapid change. Shawn Yancey, who sells trucks for Lindsay Chevrolet Inc. in Springfield, Missouri, recalls a period in 2001 when everything in his business seemed to be changing; there were new trucks, new systems and new people to deal with. On top of everything at work, Yancey's infant daughter had significant medical problems that caused concern and required constant attention.

How did he handle all of this and still sell 497 trucks in 2001?

"You have to be able to roll with change," Yancey says. "I go back to the basics and take one step at a time. You can't deal with everything all at once, so you take a smaller focus and just accomplish what's in front of you that day."

During slow periods, this may mean making five prospecting phone calls, sending

out 20 mailers and calling on three prospects in person.

Yancey also credits his faith in God and strong family relationships—his father Steve is his longtime business partner—for helping him deal with personal and professional pressures.

When motivation is flagging, Yancey recommends

that sales professionals educate themselves about their products and the market. "If you don't feel that you're an expert in your field, it undermines your confidence and decreases your motivation," he says. Take every opportunity to learn more about the products and the competition. Read everything you can, demo the new trucks and pick the brains of everyone you know at the dealership, in the field or at the factory.



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## THE RIGHT ATTITUDE

Some people think that sales professionals are only motivated by money—but in fact, a good attitude is more motivating than anything else is. By contrast, the most demoralizing thing for a salesperson is to go too long without a sale, according to Claiborne.

"People think sales is all about the pay plan," he says. "It's not. If someone goes too long without a sale, they'll start sinking. You begin to lose faith in yourself. So I push for any kind of sale I can get—*anything*. Even if it means cutting a deal way down to nothing.

"I make every sale a big deal," he adds. "We write it on a board where everyone can see it; we recognize Salesperson of the Month. Respect and recognition—that's what keeps everyone enthusiastic."

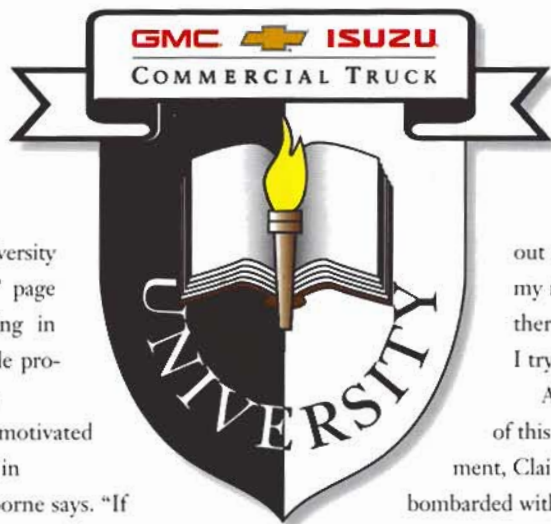
Fortunately, enthusiasm is catching. Most people in high positions—general managers, for example—are very enthusiastic. Many times, all it takes is a pep talk from one of these people to get a salesperson motivated. Claiborne, a sales manager, sees this a lot. "I have guys who come into my office, close the door and slump down in a chair. 'Kick me and get me going,' they say."

For the most part, these sales professionals know what they're doing wrong—perhaps driving around town all day but never getting out of their truck—but they need someone to cheer them on. "This is a hard job. People need support and encouragement," Claiborne contends.

Another way to improve your attitude is to get out there and get involved. "You can't sit in the dealership," Yancey says. "You have to get out, knock on doors, travel, build relationships and talk to people about trucks." Salespeople can also boost their enthusiasm by attending GMICT University courses

(see "GMICT University Course Schedule," page 1) and participating in the Winners' Circle program (see sidebar).

"I keep myself motivated by being involved in everything," Claiborne says. "If something new comes out and I have an opinion about it, I pick up the phone and let the factory or my customers know. I fill



out surveys and put my name on them. If there's a new program, I try to get involved."

As a result of years of this kind of involvement, Claiborne says he's

bombarded with new ideas every day. "I don't have time to mope around," he says, "because there's always something happening." ■

## WINNERS' CIRCLE

### Your Best Motivational Tool

Sales consultants who are new to Chevrolet/GMC often use Winners' Circle Gold, Silver and Bronze Level achievement as benchmarks for their progress. If they can make the Bronze Level their first year—great! Silver Level their second year—excellent! And Gold Level their third year—fantastic! They know they are making impressive progress.

Some salespeople also keep a countdown notebook to track their progress toward earning a Winners' Circle Gold Level award. If they hit November and have just 55 sales, they know they need to push to qualify before the end of the year.

Shawn Yancey, sales consultant for Lindsay Chevrolet in Springfield, Missouri, says Winners' Circle is very motivational because of the recognition it provides. "In this field, there's very little recognition," he says. "There's not

much that says, 'These guys are very good at what they do. They are among the best in the country.' Winners' Circle does that."

No matter how you're using Chevrolet/GMC's Winners' Circle program, you're getting the benefit of a motivational tool designed to help you achieve your peak potential by giving you a set ladder of annual goals, and increasing rewards as you climb the ladder. There is always something to shoot for and a great group of people to enjoy the rewards with once you have achieved your goals.

So when business slows or you feel your motivation waning, let your mind wander to a fabulous casino/hotel in Las Vegas, Nevada, or some other exotic hideaway. Then snap back into productive action, because a Winners' Circle awards trip is an exceptional way to reward your hard work.



Winners' Circle