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## The Future Of Sales, with Steve Heroux

**Shannon Waller:** Hi, Shannon Waller here, and welcome to Team Success. Today, we are going to dive into one of my favorite topics, and that is sales. And I have a wonderful expert, Steve Heroux, from The Sales Collective, to really talk about sales coaching, sales hiring, sales profiles—you know I'm a profile junkie. And I was introduced to Steve through a good friend and former client, Kate Norton. And Steve, it was delightful to meet you, really interesting to do the Sales DNA profile. And thank you very much for being on the podcast because this hiring and training and keeping great salespeople is a Herculean task as far as I'm concerned. And searching for the right people can be a real needle in the haystack. So I was super excited because I'm like, ooh, this could be the answer that I've been always wanting. And I want that for our company. I want it for my clients' companies. So I haven't implemented it yet, but it's something that I want to explore. And I'm thrilled that you're here. So thanks for joining me.

**Steve Heroux:** Awesome. Thanks so much. I don't know if it's the answer. It's an answer for sure. But I'm excited to share with all of y'all what Sales DNA is and what we do and how we can sort of flip, you know, the script on how salespeople are thought of because it's not endearing.

**Shannon Waller:** No.

**Steve Heroux:** So we might cover that.

**Shannon Waller:** No, that's interesting. Okay. Before we jump into that, and I think that's where I'd love to start, tell me a little bit, well, tell us a little bit about you. How did you get started? How did you find this? How did you land on this? Because clearly it's a passion for you. How did your entrepreneurial journey happen?

**Steve Heroux:** I am probably the last person who would ever end up in sales. I grew up in Boston and didn't say a word for the first 18 years of my life, practically. So think of the shyest person you've ever met, and then think of someone that would be shyer than that, and that was me. No dates, no dances, no proms, nothing. Somehow got into a really expensive business school in Boston and got my first semester of books and cost me \$1,600 for five books. And so I was like, I got to help my parents pay for this. And so I answered a job ad and all the ad said was \$10 an hour part-time job and a phone number. And that was it. And so I called the ad and I said, "Hey, what is this ad?" You got like those pull tabs and stuff all over campus. And they go, "It's sales." And I said to the gal, I'm like, "So would I have to like talk to anybody or do you have like a desk job or something?" They go, "Yeah, you have to talk to people. What's wrong with you?" I said, "Well, is there nothing I can do in the back or something?" They're like, no. I said, "Well, what would I be selling?" They go, "We'll tell you when you get down here."



So I went down, I got hired, right, because I was alive and upright. I went home and told my parents and my dad goes, "How'd it go, Stevie?" I'm like, "Good, Dad. I got the job." He goes, "Great. What are you going to be doing?" I said—some of you probably will already know what this is. I said, "I think I'm going to sell knives, Dad." So we have Cutco knives here right in the States. A lot of people have in Canada too, but my dad, who also is Frank Costanza from Seinfeld, George's dad, some of you might get this, didn't exactly have a positive take on this so forbid me from doing it and told me to get a real job. And so that was freshman year of college. By senior year, I was number one in the country selling Cutco knives, from a kid that didn't talk. And so they did what every company does, right? They go, "Hey Steve, you're good at sales. Want to be a sales manager?" Companies continue to do this. Please don't do this if you're considering this. There's a reason that airlines don't make the flight attendants the pilots the following summer.

So I struggled. And still leading folks is not the same as selling to folks. And so I ended up being really successful leading sales teams. Then I went to the insurance company with the duck. And some of you know what Aflac is. And I spent 13 years with Aflac. And somehow, in my heyday, 59,000 agents did worse than I did, so I'll let you figure out what that means. So when I left Aflac, just realized I had a real passion more for teaching and coaching, and so sort of went off on my own, built a training course for Aflac agents that I went, traveled the country, and taught them. I ended up saying, hey, I could do this whole virtual thing. This is prior to the pandemic, and I was doing a lot of coaching through Zoom. And I went to Costa Rica with a friend of mine and said, you know what? I'm just going to move here. So I moved to Costa Rica and lived there all of 2019. And right around the end of 2020 is when I got introduced to the Sales DNA test, which you took, and had flying color scores. And my buddy with Aflac is the one that made me take it. And he goes, "Hey, Steve, you've got to take this assessment." And I'm like, "Mike, I don't like these. It's not predictive, it's got nothing to do with sales." He's like, "No, no, no, no, this one is legit." I'm like, fine. So I took it, and when I saw my results, like when you saw yours, right, I wanted to jump off a bridge. Because I'm like, man, you stink at sales, right? How did you sell so many knives and so much insurance?

But when I saw the results, no one ever taught me 97% of what's on the Sales DNA test. Nobody ever taught me. I never heard of it. And so after I saw my results, I was like, could you imagine if I knew any of this? I would have been number one every year, not just one year. And so the next day, I shut down my Aflac training business and built what we have today with The Sales Collective with the idea of Sales DNA test is the MRI. Why don't we build custom training, physical therapy, to help people fix their injury, not just, hey, let's give everybody the same training. And so that's how it was born. Probably a month after that, I did a talk for something called The Sales Enablement Society. This nice woman was like, "You need to be a Vistage speaker. Like now." I'm like, "What does that mean? What is Vistage?" She goes, "You don't know what Vistage is?" I go, no. She goes, "Just, you need to apply." So anyway, I did, you know, now three years, four years later, I think I've done 320 or something talks for



YOUR TEAM SUCCESS PODCAST

## The Future Of Sales, with Steve Heroux

Vistage. So that's sort of how it all began. And so thankful and humbled I get to do what I do for a living. People ask us all the time, what do you do? What's your talk about? What's your company do? I say, well, we try to undo 99% of what people have been taught about sales and sales leadership. So that's what gets me up every day.

**Shannon Waller:** I love that. Well, congratulations. I mean, that's quite a transformation for someone who was so achingly shy to be number one for ...

**Steve Heroux:** Yeah, you should have seen my high school reunions. They're like, you do what? You're a speaker? Like in front of people? I'm like, yeah, lots of them. Like, you're Steve Heroux, right? I'm like, yeah.

**Shannon Waller:** There was a hidden gem in there, just had to come out.

**Steve Heroux:** Yeah, pretty interesting.

**Shannon Waller:** But the Cutco training is superb, as is insurance. Well, you may not agree about the training, but the push out into the market and just test yourself against it, same with insurance, is pretty powerful. So, kudos to you for finding your Unique Ability.

**Steve Heroux:** Yeah, the list of Cutco alums is long. I mean, some of you have read The Miracle Morning, right? Hal Elrod. There's just so many, right, that started there and wasn't the easiest thing, but trained us.

**Shannon Waller:** Yeah, that's fantastic. Awesome. So before we jump into the Sales DNA, because that's going to take a minute and there's so many amazing dimensions of it, let's talk about what the perception is of sales. And again, for entrepreneurs, often they are the number one salesperson for their company, as they should be. Because they're often the most passionate. They understand what we call the dangers, opportunities, and strengths of their clientele. And they are able to customize, often on the fly, exactly what it is that will be the solution for them. So it's not cut and dried. But then, as they want to get freed up to even do what even they're more unique at or go to a higher level of clientele, or value creation, they need to replace themselves.

And everyone's like, "Well, I'm unique. How can this happen?" And then finding those people can be hard. Profiling them is hard. Having predictable results is hard. The crash and burn rate is ... hard. So let's talk about the perception of sales. Let's talk about sales leadership. And again, there's a standard, which I'm going to say is corporate, which is not a world I relate to. But even just let's talk about sales in general. And it's interesting because I do think, I think to what you're going to say, is that people don't like run with both arms pumping into a sales profession because it has a bit of a negative rap. So let's chat about that. Let's talk about what sales is really, let's talk about the perception of it, and let's talk about the transformation that you'd like to see.



YOUR TEAM SUCCESS PODCAST

## The Future Of Sales, with Steve Heroux

**Steve Heroux:** It's funny, when you said that, they don't run into it, I haven't shared this in a while, but 55% of people, roughly, the last study in sales, never intended to go into sales. So that's one. But the perception of salespeople, and this will never change, it's never gonna get better, this is how it's been for 100 years, there are multiple professions that are the least trusted. Y'all can look up the surveys. Do you know what two of the ones that are similar to salespeople that are distrusted the most? What two professions?

**Shannon Waller:** I can only think of used car salesman, but that's a sales profession.

**Steve Heroux:** Attorneys. Politicians.

**Shannon Waller:** Oh, no way.

**Steve Heroux:** That is the equivalent. So, yeah, we're not in a good spot. One of the most amazing studies done on this was part of Daniel Pink's book *To Sell is Human*, which is amazing, and Daniel's amazing. The study was also done in conjunction with Adam Grant, who's also incredible. And they asked people, "What's the first word that comes to mind when you hear the word 'salesperson'?" And y'all can look it up, it's on Google or whatever, ChatGPT, [unintelligible]. In the word cloud of people's answers, the largest word, and it takes up almost the entire word cloud, the most common answer is pushy.

**Shannon Waller:** Oh, OK.

**Steve Heroux:** Second most common answer is yuck.

**Shannon Waller:** No! Where is manipulate?

**Steve Heroux:** It's on there. Yuck, sleazy, aggressive. It's just horrible. Right? And so you get this sense of, you know, is that really how we are thought of? Yes, that's how you're thought of. And when I give this in big keynotes and talks and things and I ask the audience, I said, "Who caused this?" What's the answer? What do you think most people say? Who caused this perception of bad salespeople?

**Shannon Waller:** I think most people would say salespeople.

**Steve Heroux:** That's what most people say. If a dog is bad, is it the dog that's bad?

**Shannon Waller:** No, that would be the owner.

**Steve Heroux:** It's leaders who have caused this, right? This is why people hate salespeople because leaders are pushing their own agendas right down the throats of their salespeople and they go, "Sell or die." "What do you mean? You don't want me to sell to the right people?" No,



no, no, no, no, no. "But I should only sell to people who really need what we have, correct?" No, no, no, no. "But I really just stick to our ideal customer profile, correct?" No, no, no, no. "So who do you want me to sell to?" "Well, see, if anybody comes within three square feet of you, them."

**Shannon Waller:** Kind of to your point, if they're breathing and upright.

**Steve Heroux:** It's awful. But that's why people hate salespeople, because there's zero concern for whether or not they need, whether or not they could use, whether or not it benefits them. Again, this is a huge part of what we have to undo, especially with leaders. Because again, they think for some unknown reason that assigning some arbitrary quota to a salesperson that was made up in a boardroom from spreadsheets from a year ago will somehow get the salesperson to go, "Honey, I am so excited for tomorrow. I don't know if I can sleep tonight. I can't contain myself." Right? And their partner goes, why? And the salesperson goes, "You're not going to believe this. I get a chance to raise my company's EBITDA tomorrow. I can't even wait." Nobody's ever said that ever in 10 million years. And that's somehow what leaders think or private equity like, McFly, is anybody home? Salespeople care about two entities, four if you do it right: themselves and their families, and that's it. And then if you do it right, as a future leader, entrepreneur, business owner, you want to grow, it's the people that they work with and their customers, most importantly. And my coach, Pamela, she might have been the one that told me this, I'm not sure. But she said, "Steve, just because somebody wants to buy something from you doesn't mean you should sell it to them."

**Shannon Waller:** Yes.

**Steve Heroux:** And if she didn't say that, well, you just got credit, Pamela. But some amazing person told me that. And so, saying no is really hard. And we say no a lot more than we used to. But most companies don't. And they certainly don't teach it to their salespeople. It's just, hey, are they alive? Yeah. Do they have money? Yeah. Cool. Sell them. Sad.

**Shannon Waller:** So that's really interesting, because if I think about our Strategic Coach approach to things, it's being very, very clear on your potential clients and your real clients' goals, what their dreams are, what their dangers are, what their opportunities are, what their strengths are. I know for us, we have a right-fit client criteria that is very specific. It is a narrow, narrow niche in the marketplace. EOS helps people define that. So that sounds to me how I would label a bureaucratic or corporate sales environment.

**Steve Heroux:** Correct.

**Shannon Waller:** And you work with Vistage, which is entrepreneurs, last time I checked.



YOUR TEAM SUCCESS PODCAST

## The Future Of Sales, with Steve Heroux

**Steve Heroux:** Yes.

**Shannon Waller:** Do you find that same mindset with entrepreneurs or does it shift a little bit or is it left over from there and they just don't have a new model yet?

**Steve Heroux:** It's left over. They don't even know any different because that's what they were taught. And especially entrepreneurs, it's way worse.

**Shannon Waller:** [laughs] It's way worse?!

**Steve Heroux:** Way worse. Because if you're in corporate America and you have a bunch of money-hungry salespeople and they sell bad deals, like they're not all going to sell bad deals because you have a big brand, you have hundreds of millions of dollars, it doesn't matter. If you're an entrepreneur and you do this to people, you might lose your company. Like, that could be it. And if you don't know how to sell, which is most entrepreneurs' challenges, right? They know how to build software. I know how to manufacture this part. That doesn't mean you know how to sell it. And that's where so many entrepreneurs never get the scale they want. Because just because you can build it doesn't mean you can sell it. And so if you do not hire the right salesperson, which they are also untrained at, What's the chance that you have success? You're putting the future of your company into a salesperson, a representative of you, and if you select the wrong one, the results could be devastating. That's part of the challenge and why, as a younger business person, if I would have known this stuff, oh my God, it would have been a different story, but I made all these mistakes.

**Shannon Waller:** So, paint for me a picture of an enlightened entrepreneur, sales leader, coach, because that's part of what you do and your company does. So, paint for me the picture of what it could be, would be. I don't like "should"—too "Gap" for me—but what do you work with people to get them? Where do you want them to go or get to?

**Steve Heroux:** Well, you sort of said it with Strategic Coach, like you can't just take on clients because you need revenue. That will kill you. It's the opposite of what should be done. You have to be more selective at early stage in your company—more selective, not less selective. Because if you take on a bad client, a bad customer, a bad vendor, whatever, and it's early on in your company and something goes wrong, they will scream that from the mountaintops, you won't recover. Second thing, you take on a bad client, bad customer, you're wasting endless amounts of time with people who, number one, don't deserve your time, but number two, will use it up. Now you have an unprofitable company, an unprofitable deal that's also killing you mentally, not just physically, not just bandwidth-wise, but that's not ever taught. Early stage. "Oh, you need revenue. You need revenue. We got to see the numbers." No, you don't. You need good revenue. You need sustainable revenue. You need long-term clients and longer lifetime value of customers and higher average order or average deal size or whatever it is you





YOUR TEAM SUCCESS PODCAST

## The Future Of Sales, with Steve Heroux

want to call it. But that's never taught, never taught. It's just, go get some sales. That's the worst.

**Shannon Waller:** So I love being more selective. I mean, that makes complete sense. We coach exactly how to pinpoint that in The Strategic Coach Program. So being more selective, saying no, which takes courage, right? You have to have that longer term perspective. We have our 4 C's, which is commitment, which immediately begets courage, which feels crappy. You know, it's scary as heck. Then, out of that develops capabilities, and out of that develops confidence. And I know as a beginning salesperson, when I signed up someone who turned out to be a horrible fit for Strategic Coach and I had to refund the commission, that was a hard lesson that I never made that mistake again.

**Steve Heroux:** You just made me think of something. This actually came up in Minnesota a couple days ago. Refunds, right? I don't know how I made the connection, but then I made the connection to accounts receivable. So there are companies, not entrepreneurial, luckily, but there are companies who have entire departments of accounts receivables because customers aren't paying them. Just re-listen to what I just said, y'all. They have entire departments of customers who aren't paying them. Most of the time, it's because they were a bad customer to begin with. If you never took them on, you wouldn't have to waste time and money and resources and collections agencies and all these things. There are entire industries that exist because salespeople and companies take bad customers. It's scary, scary.

**Shannon Waller:** That's a really good point. You know, we talk about simplifying to multiply because if you want to multiply complexity, no sane human does that. So part of growing is being really, really clear about who you best serve, what your Unique Ability is, what your company's Unique Ability is, how you create value for them. Dan has an expression, the narrower the niche (niche/niche, Canadian/American, whatever), the bigger the market. But that's a really scary thing to do, especially at the beginning when you're not cash confident. So I totally appreciate that.

**Steve Heroux:** And it's never done.

**Shannon Waller:** No, keep refining it.

**Steve Heroux:** You met Kate, and we talked about our road map and sort of EOS, there's so much connections between all of us. But if a company ever came to us and goes, "Hey, help us grow sales," right? "Help us hire someone." I would say, "You don't have enough money." They'd say, "What do you mean?" I go, "Help you hire somebody to execute what?" They go, "Well, sell these, you know, coffee cups." "No, no, no. You don't even have a process built. No, no, no, no. We will build the process right now from soup to nuts. From the second a lead comes in or a phone call comes in or a web or anything comes in to full-service nurture, all of that has to be built before you ever even consider hiring a salesperson." And this is the mistake



YOUR TEAM SUCCESS PODCAST

## The Future Of Sales, with Steve Heroux

that 99% of entrepreneurs make. They have this great product or service. They go, "Oh, I got to get someone to sell it." No. Wrong. You build the sales process, you build the playbook, then you hire the person who fits the skills, mindset, competencies where they can sell that thing. That's why DNA is important. Then you teach that person how to execute your playbook. But that's not what's done. And some, well, they have Canadian football, but some folks listening, right?

**Shannon Waller:** It's a longer field, just so you know.

**Steve Heroux:** Longer field, only three downs. But in the NFL, for you NFL fans, right, there's 32 teams, okay, 32 teams in football, even the Jets count. So 32 teams. I'll ask you, actually, how many ...

**Shannon Waller:** Oh, no, don't ask me a football question.

**Steve Heroux:** You'll know it. How many of the 32 teams have a playbook?

**Shannon Waller:** All of them.

**Steve Heroux:** Why? They know how to play football. They make millions a year.

**Shannon Waller:** Yeah, but each person has their own expertise. If they don't know how it all integrates together, then the play's not gonna be successful, and they're not gonna win games.

**Steve Heroux:** Do they practice these plays?

**Shannon Waller:** Absolutely.

**Steve Heroux:** How much?

**Shannon Waller:** Every practice.

**Steve Heroux:** So, I asked this last week in Iowa, or almost every time, sometimes I forget. On a Sunday, in the NFL, the games are three hours long. Have you watched them on TV? The clock says 60 minutes, right? It's a 60-minute game. Do you know how many minutes, you know, they're actually playing football? Do you know this number?

**Shannon Waller:** Isn't it 60?

**Steve Heroux:** 14 minutes.

**Shannon Waller:** No.

**Steve Heroux:** 14 minutes of running and passing. 14, that's it.





YOUR TEAM SUCCESS PODCAST

## The Future Of Sales, with Steve Heroux

**Shannon Waller:** Interesting.

**Steve Heroux:** So, on a Sunday, NFL players work 14 minutes. By the way, not all of them, because there's only 11 on offense and 11 on defense, and 35 are not doing anything on either sideline. So, to prepare for those 14 minutes, an NFL athlete from Tuesday to Saturday puts in 60 hours, 6-0. 60 hours of preparation for 14 minutes.

**Shannon Waller:** That's cool.

**Steve Heroux:** And when I ask companies how much their salespeople practice and role play and film study before their 14-minute demo, yeah, it's not 60 hours. But the point I'm making is, there are 32 teams in the NFL, 32 playbooks. How many of the 32 playbooks are different or is it all one playbook? Here's the playbook. It's called football. So, how many different playbooks out of 32 do you think there are?

**Shannon Waller:** I think every team would say they have their own playbook.

**Steve Heroux:** 32.

**Shannon Waller:** Yeah.

**Steve Heroux:** Why? It's just football. Why don't we just run all the same plays?

**Shannon Waller:** Because then it's too easy to beat.

**Steve Heroux:** This is why.

**Shannon Waller:** Yeah, so this is interesting because some other coaching we've got, and it was Bill Cates, who's a great person on referrals. He goes, we were talking about referability.

**Steve Heroux:** I saw him speak once.

**Shannon Waller:** He's great.

**Steve Heroux:** Four years ago.

**Shannon Waller:** Yeah, awesome. Super smart guy. He said, to be referable, you need three things. Referable product. I was like, check, Strategic Coach, amazing program, all the things. You need referable salespeople. I'm like, yeah, pretty good. Then he said, you need a referable sales process. And Babs and I looked at each other—Babs is co-owner, co-founder of Coach—and we looked at each other and went, gulp. As many salespeople as we had, that's how many sales processes we have.



YOUR TEAM SUCCESS PODCAST

## The Future Of Sales, with Steve Heroux

**Steve Heroux:** Correct.

**Shannon Waller:** Process was probably a nice word. Now, since then, we've worked our rear ends off to get a sales process and a playbook. And then, you know, Salesforce has been helpful with that because you can structure it. But it's a work in progress, and I think we've probably been working on it for eight years.

**Steve Heroux:** Yes.

**Shannon Waller:** It is not easy to do. So I find that very correlate with our experience. And I think that's a really great point. And then hiring people who will run those plays.

**Steve Heroux:** Correct.

**Shannon Waller:** And work on their own skills, like same as, like, strength or running training for football players is key. So that's a really interesting point.

**Steve Heroux:** Yeah, it's never done, though. What companies do, if they were a football team, right, they look at their players, their salespeople and go, hey, there's the field. Yes, score. Sorry, what? Yeah, just score some, go long or something, I don't know, you figure it out. That's what they do. It's crazy.

**Shannon Waller:** Makes me think of Ted Lasso. Now, just briefly, are there some key elements of a sales process? I would love for someone listening to go, yep, I got that step, that step, nope, missing that one. Is there kind of some highlights? Because I know you coach a whole process on the process. Yeah, we will not get all of that.

**Steve Heroux:** No, there's a lot, but I will start with probably the first section of what matters is your go-to-market strategy. And the very first thing, believe it or not, is the why. Why should I, would I, do I get behind this product I'm selling? So many people know Simon, who's amazing, and Start With Why. It's just funny, Simon's book Start With Why, which is millions of copies, it wasn't even supposed to be a book. It was a chapter in another book, and his coach said, hey Simon, get rid of all this crap. This chapter is the book. That's how it started.

**Shannon Waller:** Oh, my goodness. That's brilliant. Yeah.

**Steve Heroux:** So when we talk about a why and really driving the passion behind why you started the company towards your salespeople and having them understand where this all was built. But the best analogy I can give you for a why isn't Simon's, it's actually JFK. In 1962 at NASA headquarters. So he's walking down the hallway, bumps into a janitor and asked the janitor what he's doing. And the janitor said, "I'm helping to put a man on the moon, Mr. President." That's the janitor I want. But that's also the salesperson I want. If the salesperson is not so excited to wake up every day and live her life the best that she can and represent this



product, company, service, whatever, like you have no shot. But what entrepreneurs don't understand a lot is that no one will have your passion. So, to expect someone to do that, it doesn't make sense. But if someone has 80% of the passion you have, 70, 90, but that has to be your role. If they are the janitor who says, oh, I'm just gonna sweep the bathroom and I'm outta here, and that's your salesperson, you're in big trouble.

So, working with a company to help them deliver that message to their applicants... Not when they hire them. This has to be in the process of interviewing. If an applicant sees somebody like that and is like, oh my God, I want to represent this company, that's all part of recruiting, right? So the why is really important. And the second part, just to go to market, is what you said earlier. It's defining their ICP, right? Who's their ideal customer? Profile's the P in that. And so we've got to flesh that out, and you have to ask your customers, if anybody's listening to this, please, please, please poll your customers. We just did this with our company, and we got feedback from, like, I don't even know, 230 clients or something. And we said, okay, why did you hire them? So we asked them that. And most of the time, right, to generate revenue, you know, whatever, right? Improve hiring, whatever, blah answers. Then we asked them, what did you get out of the engagement with them? And the answers were shocking.

The number two answer was, "They made it fun to go to work again. We liked doing our jobs." And then the number one answer was, in essence, paraphrasing, but "They put the fun back in sales for us." We had so many people that shared that like they didn't even like what they did for a job every day. How could you do that? And if that's your salesperson, of course they're not going to be successful or perform highly because you've turned it into a job. You've made them a cog or a notch on the belt of your EBITDA. And when people are treated like a number, everyone on here knows this, you know it when you're treated like that as a customer. Well, how do you think salespeople feel when they're just a line item in a spreadsheet as an expense? It's crazy. And people tell us a lot of stuff they don't tell their bosses, so that's how we learn this stuff.

**Shannon Waller:** Oh, yeah. This ties brilliantly into a Coach concept and conversation, which is treat people as investments, not costs, because how any smart business person treats costs is you try to minimize them. That does not work very well when you apply it to humans. And what do we try to do with investments? We want to maximize them. So when we treat people as costs, like as a cog in a wheel, as you said, they'll, I mean, we're very much relationship-focused versus transactional, but that becomes transactional. And then they have transactional communications with your prospective clients and your clients. And then the whole thing goes to heck in a handbasket. So yes, I'm all on that investment. And so when people feel like they're being invested in and cared about, and I mean, fun is a technical word in my world. It's not a frivolous thing. It's like, it's super enjoyable. It's connected on a heart level, not just a head level. People engage their striving instincts when they care, right?



YOUR TEAM SUCCESS PODCAST

## The Future Of Sales, with Steve Heroux

**Steve Heroux:** Like Marcus, you know, Marcus Buckingham, right? It's like love and work. Oh, what a surprise. What an interesting concept. Love the people you work with, right? Help them thrive. That's your job as a leader, right, is to help people realize their own superpower and then help them achieve. That's the role, not to assign what you want them to do. But this is not common. And again, I'd rather be uncommon, I guess.

**Shannon Waller:** Well, so would we. So let's start moving into the type of person who will run that process because process was probably a whole other podcast. But those two things are super helpful. Because some people will be a right fit from a personality, striving mindset perspective, and some people will never be. Despite your earlier shyness, you clearly were the right fit. So I'm interested because I know, for me, it's just a certain look on the world. And either you kind of have it or you don't. And that's part of what I got from Sales DNA, is it's either kind of there, DNA, or it ain't.

**Steve Heroux:** That's the will to sell. That's everything. Everything is the will to sell. Everything. And if someone doesn't have it, and we can talk about it, but if they don't have that, there is no chance. No chance. And we have the science to prove it, especially with what we just got back a month ago.

**Shannon Waller:** Right. So let's talk about the whole Sales DNA profile, and then we'll go into the bits. Will to sell is, if I understand it correctly, there's almost like three hoops to jump through. And if people don't have the will to sell, and they don't score highly on that part of it, because it actually is more of a test even than a profile, I think, people can kind of flunk it. If you think of it that way, you would be a not recommend, right? There's will to sell, then Sales DNA, and then tactical. The whole thing is also called Sales DNA. And some of it's learnable, and some of it is not. Some of it's factory installed, as we like to say. And I do think some people, you know, in Coach terms, it's Unique Ability. And I think for a lot of people, entrepreneurs, business owners, they're thrilled to really discover and home in on their own Unique Ability. And they want that for their team. But sales, there's this tussle between, "Okay, great, you do you" and "We need results." And I think one of the things I appreciate about what I'm learning about Sales DNA is this is where you can find the people who have that natural Unique Ability. Here's how you can develop it and not dissuade people from doing what they love to do anyway. So it kind of is that integration of having people do what they love to do and are best at and produce results in a very predictable fashion. So, before we dive in, talk a little about where the profile came from. The thing that I appreciate, I mean, I get exposed to a lot of profiles.

**Steve Heroux:** Yeah. There's only 2,500.



**Shannon Waller:** Exactly. I've done a decent chunk of those. And as much as I love the one, "Which Avenger are you?" It's not exactly valid. And so if I recommend something, it's because I've curated a ton. And I found this one kind of fascinating. Again, we have not installed it in Coach, so I can't give you our company experience, but I can give you my personal experience. So where did the profile come from? How long has it been around? And then your company, Sales Collective, uses this. It was created outside. So, tell us a little bit about that background and then we'll dive into the bits.

**Steve Heroux:** So, to go back to when I first took it, Mike, my buddy in Aflac, he used to run Aflac New England, who told me to take it. He basically said, "If you don't take this, I'm never talking to you again." So I took it.

**Shannon Waller:** Good friend.

**Steve Heroux:** And I said, "Why should I take this?" "Dude, I've been using this for 20 years." And I go, "I never even heard of it." Because OMG, who's the company, by the way, Objective Management Group, you know, doesn't do a lot of advertising or stuff like that. They work through partners, right, like us. And so when I took it and I was like, wow, this is pretty awesome. And so, he had used it for years, but I never heard of it like most people. So we call it the Sales DNA Test. That's my name for it. But it's Objective Management Group's, you know, assessment. And there's an assessment for a salesperson. Then there's one for a sales manager. Then there's one for sales leader. Then there's one for leaders, not in sales. So there are different functions of the test. So, that's how I first heard about it. And then after I took it, I'm like, well, how valid is this? Because we've all been through lots of tests and personality profiles and all these things. The first part, someone's personality has about zero bearing on whether or not they're good in sales. And where this came from, who knows, but it's probably from the people selling personality to, you know, like vitamin C cures colds, right? See, who came up with that? Oh, funny, the people that have vitamin C in their stuff.

So, that's part of why so many folks are frustrated with assessments, because the overwhelming majority, they're not data companies, they're marketing agencies. And so we ask companies like, you mentioned Avenger thing, like, what assessment do you use for salespeople? And they go, "Well, we use the Johnson." "Sorry, what is it?" "Yeah, the Johnson." "How do you tell if someone's good?" "Well, it says here in the glossary that if they're a purple dinosaur, that's a go." "What? What if they're not?" "Well, if they're an orange orangutan, you have to run." Like, what the hell? What are you talking about? You use this? This is what people use for assessments. And so, the reason I love DNA is, 35 years of data. 2.5 million people have taken this test. That's the data pool. 38,000 companies use this or have used this, growing by the day. 50-something countries.



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## The Future Of Sales, with Steve Heroux

And so we just did our predictive validity study, which OMG does every five years, which every assessment company should be doing, you know, validating the claims they make. So OMG went back and asked all the people that use Sales DNA in hiring. And you remember this from our conversation. When a test is used for a candidate, these are custom-built by the client and us, and we help them design. What does your ideal coffee cup salesperson look like, smell like, and so on? So when someone takes the test, it comes back as one of three results: Recommended, which is, you should talk to this person. We can't use it for hiring. All of you know this, especially if you're in California. So, "recommended for an interview." The second function of the test is "worthy of consideration." And what that means is, "Well, we think they'll be good, but they didn't meet your criteria. Remember you said you wanted this? We're telling you they don't meet this. So it's up to you if you want to interview them." And then the last function of the test says, "don't ever talk to this person again." It doesn't really say that. I suggested that to OMG. They didn't wanna change it.

**Shannon Waller:** I think it's, is it "not recommended"?

**Steve Heroux:** Yeah, not recommended.

**Shannon Waller:** Okay, just checking.

**Steve Heroux:** So, here's the math from the study, which is insane. So, they went back to all the clients that use this, and they said, for the salespeople you hired that we recommended, what percentage of them are above average performers on your team? Okay. What percentage are good? It's 72%.

**Shannon Waller:** Nice.

**Steve Heroux:** The national average for companies hiring salespeople is 24%, 25. It's three times the average. But what was flabbergasting was that this test is not good to predict superstars, right? No one is, right? Ask any pro team who drafted a person who's a dud. But it is immensely great at predicting dumpster fire hires. And what we found—people don't even believe the data, but we have all the reports—of the companies who ignored the sales DNA test that said "not recommended," and the company goes, "No, we love Bill. Sure, yeah, we love him." Yeah, but it says not recommended. "No, we can fix him." Those companies, 100% of those people they hired were in the bottom half of their sales teams. Not one soul become a top performer, which is crazy.

**Shannon Waller:** I love the dumpster fire.

**Steve Heroux:** That's really, I'm a contrarian, but in hiring, you're not going to hire perfectly. No one is, ever. But you just can't hire poorly. That will ruin your company. Everyone's going to have misses. Everyone's going to have hits and so on. But if we can help companies not hire these disastrous situations... I don't know if you play poker or you know anything about poker,





but in poker, there are women and men who make all the money. It's like, you know, a handful, right? And they take all the money off all the bad players. And the best women and men in the world who make millions and millions of dollars playing poker, do you know what their best skill is? I'll give you a hint. It's not playing poker.

**Shannon Waller:** Oh, what is it?

**Steve Heroux:** It's reading people.

**Shannon Waller:** Oh, good one.

**Steve Heroux:** But all the worst players in the world try to play poker. They spend no time on trying to understand people's tells, right? Which is where you know if they really have it or if they're bluffing. And the best women and men in the world, they know you don't have the best hand, they go all in. It's irrelevant what they have. They also know, when you go all in and put all your money in the middle of the table, and you're lying, you're bluffing, they can tell because they saw your earlobe twitch. That's how you make millions of dollars, but that's also what companies can't do effectively when they hire. So if you are not trained as an interviewer, you have no idea how to be able to tell if someone's telling you the truth or not, you only have two options. Learn how to do that, which takes a long time, or use a tool that can tell you. It's only those two.

**Shannon Waller:** Which is why I love profiles because they're an incredibly efficient strategy and shortcut to give you insight into someone that otherwise would take months and months and months and tens of thousands of dollars to do. My husband was studying... We go to Palm Springs for a couple of weeks every year, where I got my COVID timeshare because I was stuck in 2021. And I couldn't leave the U.S. to come to Canada. So, he plays live doubles tennis. And so he was researching how to win doubles tennis. Well, it turns out the best way to win doubles tennis is to not make mistakes and to force errors on the other side.

**Steve Heroux:** That's right. That's poker. The way that you win money in poker, believe it or not, is folding hands. It's not winning hands. It's folding really great hands because she has a slightly better hand. That's how people win in poker, and that's how your husband wins in doubles.

**Shannon Waller:** Well, and it's interesting because I think we tend to... I do. I get seduced by the bright, shiny object. That's factory installed with me. So I'm looking for the star person. I'm looking for the star player, the star salesperson. I'm like, oh my God, they're going to be amazing. They're going to be God's gift to our team and to our prospects. And yes, that's great to find them. However, I might be more successful eliminating the people who will never be more, not even average, not even in the middle, right? And that's actually how my company will succeed and grow. So, that's a very, very interesting setting. The cool research, I mean, I



will not recommend a profile that's not been validated. So, that's actually why we're talking today, because I'm like, without those results, forget about it. As interesting as it is, no. Learned my lesson there.

**Steve Heroux:** One thing, Shannon, you just said that also would help a lot of entrepreneurs—you don't need superstar salespeople. And this is where so many companies make the mistake. And this is why I'm so process-oriented. Build an amazing process. Then, you just need a B player. You don't need the A. The A is luck. The A is drafting Tom Brady 199. That's the A. But you don't need that. You need the process to be able to have somebody that's pretty good execute. Somebody that's pretty good with a process will outperform everybody every time who's amazing but in chaos. But it's not done, so it all ties in together.

**Shannon Waller:** Interesting, because I started 33 years ago doing sales. And if I didn't kill, I didn't eat. 100% full commission, which was interesting and challenging, and you learn really fast that way. But it was much more chaotic. I did it based on relationship, I have a very consultative sales style, I guess you'd call it.

**Steve Heroux:** And you probably had the will to sell, right? Which is sort of this maybe next part we could share.

**Shannon Waller:** Apparently I do, but I'm Excellent, not Unique at sales. Like, it's not something... I went back to school and came up with an idea for a coaching program, the Team Programs at Coach. So I did it, which was interesting because I don't sell directly anymore. If anything, I sell from the stage, I don't sell one on one. So it was a little challenging because my circumstances are a little bit different, but let's talk about the three elements. Will to sell, Sales DNA, and tactical. So, let's talk about the will to sell. 'Cause this is the one, when you do the profile, how long does it take roughly? It's not like 10 minutes.

**Steve Heroux:** They average 46 minutes.

**Shannon Waller:** Yep. Okay, perfect. And it's not an off-the-shelf retail product. It is something that, as you said, is customized for your company. So this is not just, "Oh, I think I'm going to go log in and do it." This is something, this is an investment you'd be making in your own process, in your own...

**Steve Heroux:** Because there's two uses, right? So the first use is for hiring. They're all custom built, right? The second use is evaluating your existing salespeople, sales managers, sales leaders. Those are not custom built, right? Those are the standard versions. But in hiring, that's why it's so predictive. You get to change the parameters. You get to weight things certain... I'm hiring outside sales. They better be good at prospecting. They better be good at hunting. So those three components make it up.



**Shannon Waller:** And because of all the research, if I value something and the world's saying, actually, no, you need more of this, there's that information there too. Like, don't weight that one so low; it's actually more important than you think. And the thing that you think is so incredibly vital, eh, not so much. So I love that there is that, probably negotiation in that. So, will to sell. Okay. I'm just going to read through the things.

**Steve Heroux:** Yep, we'll go through it.

**Shannon Waller:** So, desire, commitment, outlook, responsibility, and motivation. Okay. So, I did okay. My outlook apparently is really good because I'm looking at my results right now. So, you have a target of 60, okay, so that someone has to hit at least 60% on these. But tell me a little bit—we don't have to go through all of them—but why are desire, commitment, outlook, responsibility, and motivation so key, and if someone doesn't have those, forget about it?

**Steve Heroux:** And one easy analogy, I guess, if people are familiar with the EOS model, I don't know how many people listening are, but EOS, ironically, by the way, what's the S stand for?

**Shannon Waller:** System.

**Steve Heroux:** Oh, what a surprise. Everything's systems, y'all. But EOS has something called GWC. Gets it. Wants it. Has the capacity to do it. If a person in a role doesn't GWC it, do you know what EOS suggests?

**Shannon Waller:** Bye-bye.

**Steve Heroux:** Okay. That's the will to sell. Same thing. It's not going to change. So, desire is, does this person have the desire to become a world-class sales professional? She does or she doesn't, and that's it. You can't become a world-class violinist without having the desire to become a world-class violinist first. The second is commitment. There are things that salespeople despise doing, so they will avoid doing them like the plague, because it makes them uncomfortable, and they're not feeling great when they do it. You probably know the list. Prospecting is probably number one. CRM is probably number two. Expense reports is probably number three. [crosstalk] So those are things, right, that salespeople just will not do. So commitment is a measurement of whether or not a salesperson will do the things that make her uncomfortable in order to be successful.

But in an interview, a salesperson will tell you they love all those: "I love the phone. Give me a phone, get out of my way." And then they come to work and they're allergic to it. So we can tell you in five seconds whether or not they will do the tough stuff. Outlook is a measurement of positivity, of how they feel in the situation they're in right now. Are they a glass half full, a glass half empty? Are they, you know, Eeyore, right? Says, "Woe is me, life sucks, you know what happened to me today?" Yeah, I can take a guess. So, you know those types of folks, right?



So, we look for people that have positive outlook, right? And when I lived in Costa Rica, it's funny, I thought of this. I was always a glass half full, you know, versus half empty and so on. And then I lived in Costa Rica and all the Ticos and Ticas, right? And what they taught me, and I've changed my thought on this, is I'm just happy I have a glass.

Most of this world drinks out of their hands. And we, "Well, my glass has a crack in it." So you already know: abundance mindset much better than scarcity mindset. So that's outlook. Motivation. I'll just save everybody some time. You can't motivate salespeople. Are we good? But what you can do is learn what drives them. And this goes back to part of what Daniel talks about in his book, but also what you're familiar with, the Golden Rule, I'm sure. Everybody on the call knows what that is, right? Treat people the way you want to be treated. You all know this. So, you can pause the podcast now and write this down. Don't ever do that. Nobody cares what you think. I'm sorry. I know some people are going to be hurt by that. You have to treat people the way they want. They want. That's the Platinum Rule.

**Shannon Waller:** Yes. I was going to say that is the Platinum Rule, everybody. Super important. Means you have to be curious about what they want.

**Steve Heroux:** That's what motivation does in DNA. So it will let you know, is the salesperson extrinsically motivated? Which are money, commissions, prizes, trophies, parking spaces, toys, plaques. Are they intrinsically motivated? Pride, joy, satisfaction, mastery of my craft. Or are they altruistically motivated? Mother Teresa, Gandhi, MLK. And the split of what three make up 100%. So as a leader of salespeople, I can't fathom pretending that I would know which one they are without that data. That's motivation. And then the last one is responsibility. And this one is pretty crazy, but the bottom 90% of salespeople, so the worst ones on the planet that sell the least, when they don't sell something, who do they blame?

**Shannon Waller:** Somebody else.

**Steve Heroux:** Correct. "I can't sell this. The logo's in the top right. I can't sell. By the way, next month is gonna be a little light. I'm sorry, but Mercury's in retrograde and this, I just can't." Good luck if that's your salesperson. We look for someone who takes full responsibility for their actions. So, a high score there. We know it's on me, right? We don't blame others. I did it. So that's the will to sell. And without that, there is no chance that a salesperson becomes a top performer. We have the data. They may be a body. They may be somebody you pay 80 grand to use up your time, but they will never, ever be a top performer. And that's just one part. That's five of 21 components that are measured. So that's the first part.

**Shannon Waller:** And I like it because when we debriefed my profile, it was like, okay, again, if someone does not score adequately on this one, do not pass go, do not collect \$200, do not proceed. It's like they can score high on the next sections, but if that is not there, it doesn't matter. You can't coach someone if they don't have the will. And just to tie this into a Kolbe



thing, what I learned from Kolbe is about the three parts of the mind. There is the intellectual part, your cognitive. Never hurts, in my opinion. And I also finally realized we're not all the same. I thought we were all kind of pretty much okay. Turns out that wasn't quite the case. And that's only after I profile for everything else, and if someone's still not working out, there's only one thing left.

But anyway, so presume some decent intelligence. But then there's the passion, the motivation, the desire. And that's actually what kicks into gear the will. And will I always put my hand on my gut—or it's hands is another way to think about it—but this is, when does it actually go into action? And will, I'm so glad it's called this. Because will is when people actually take what they know and take what they care about and do something with it. So, you can't go around it. You can't ignore it. You can't go over it. If you walk over it, you're gonna be left with a less than productive salesperson. So, it's so aptly named, and I just wanna stress this because without the will, it ain't happening. So anyway, total alignment with that, I love it. Yeah, so let's talk about Sales DNA, and then we'll get to tactical. So Sales DNA is interesting, and there's some fun ones if you wanna pull out some. We don't have to chat about all of them, because again, there's 20.

**Steve Heroux:** There's a couple major ones. So Sales DNA is the middle component. There's six parts of Sales DNA. But this is the way a salesperson acts, thinks, behaves, believes. So the biggest one is called the need to be liked. On the test it says need for approval, but it's basically the moniker is the need to be liked. And roughly eight out of nine salespeople need their prospects to like them. This is a really destructive trait in a salesperson, let alone in a human, but in a salesperson, because if you need your prospect to like you, you will do everything you can to make the sale, including giving away the farm. You will take on bad deals because someone wants to buy from you and you're like, well, they like me. They really, really like me. No, this is bad. You will also be a poor negotiator. You will not say no. And you won't challenge prospects, which is what world-class salespeople do. And so the top 14% of women and men in sales, they don't care if you like them. What they want and earn is respect. They would rather be respected than liked. That's why they do the best. But the distinction is, they're all still likable. You still have to be likable. Don't get that twisted. You just can't care if people like you. And that's the huge part.

**Shannon Waller:** I learned that lesson the hard way when I was 16. I did everything to get people to like me. And then finally, I'm like, screw that. It's like, what's way more important is to be respected. Now, the byproduct is people like me. But if they don't, respect is so much more important. So that was a life lesson for me a long time ago.

**Steve Heroux:** That's a big one, right? The other big one in Sales DNA is being comfortable discussing money. And 60% of salespeople, and by the way, y'all, this is 2.5 million people worth of data. Like, this is real. 60% of salespeople are uncomfortable discussing money. And



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## The Future Of Sales, with Steve Heroux

this is all caused by how we grew up. And I don't know what you were taught about money, but it was taboo. You just don't talk about it.

**Shannon Waller:** And I didn't score that well on this one either.

**Steve Heroux:** Well, most people don't, right? It's the majority of us aren't comfortable having financial discussions with people. We certainly don't want to talk about other people's money. And I told this a couple of weeks ago in one of the other random cities I'm in every month. But when I started with Aflac, I had to practice on my mom. And we're doing life insurance or disability or something, right? And, you know, you ask the questions, I'm like, "Hey, Mom, I need to know your height and weight and all this stuff." And then I'm like, "Hey, Ma, I need to know how much money you make." And if I didn't mention this earlier, my parents are the Costanzas, right, from Seinfeld. So my mom gave me a two-word answer. And the second of those two words was "you."

**Shannon Waller:** I thought it was going to be none of your business.

**Steve Heroux:** Yeah, sort of, right, yeah. The closest people to you will not tell you how much money they have. And this is why, when we see what salespeople are saying, it just drives me crazy. And it's taught in sales training. There is a question that is so intergalactically idiotic that salespeople ask prospects. It is the dumbest question in the history of Earth. Do you know what it is? What's your budget?

**Shannon Waller:** Oh, yes.

**Steve Heroux:** There's nothing dumber than that. You cannot ask a stranger, a prospect, how much money they're willing to give you for the value you've yet to show them. You can't do that. Actually, there is one question that's dumber than that, everybody. Don't do this. The only one question is dumber than "What's your budget?" "So, are you expecting or..." Only that's dumber, everybody. Don't do that. The second part of this money thing, and then we'll move on, is your worth. The value you believe you bring to the marketplace. And it's the reason most people don't become millionaires. It's not because they don't work hard or they don't have the skills. It's because they don't believe they deserve to be one. And I did this talk and article once for the Professional Photographers Association of America. I'll never forget this. And I met these two gals and they were both wedding videographers. And some of you know now, because you've probably been through this recently yourself, or your own wedding, or your daughter, whatever. It's not cheap, okay, to do one of these weddings, right, and have it all videoed. And I met these two ladies, and one of them charged \$5,000 for her service, and one of them charged \$12,000. Which one do you think was busier?

**Shannon Waller:** \$12,000.





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## The Future Of Sales, with Steve Heroux

**Steve Heroux:** Which one had 99% referrals?

**Shannon Waller:** \$12,000.

**Steve Heroux:** Which one discounted her prices?

**Shannon Waller:** The other one.

**Steve Heroux:** \$5,000. Which one had a waiting list?

**Shannon Waller:** \$12,000.

Same camera, same software, same city. One believed she was worth \$12,000, one believed she was worth \$5,000. This is why many entrepreneurs, coaches, consultants, they don't believe they're worth what they should charge. That's why they say, oh, I'll do it for 100 bucks an hour. No, no, no. If you don't believe in your worth, that's what you're worth, right? And so that's a big part of that DNA piece.

**Shannon Waller:** And it's interesting, I think a personal belief actually also makes it challenging to ask for the sale. You know, and Coach is not nothing. There's some zeros after the number. And so if you're not comfortable talking about money or that you're worth it, you also might question the value of what it is that you're selling. So that comfortableness with discussing money is, I think, really interesting. There's lots of psychological nuances. What's another key one from Sales DNA before we move over to tactical?

**Steve Heroux:** I would probably say supportive buy cycle. And supportive buy cycle means a couple things, folks. So it's two parts. The first thing is, do you take forever to make decisions? For example, you go to a restaurant with someone, and they pick up a menu, and it's an hour later and they still can't decide what they want. If that's you as a salesperson, you're in trouble because you will then acquiesce and allow your prospects, right, 20 years to make a decision. So that's one part. So that would be an unsupportive buy cycle. Somebody that takes forever to make decisions has an unsupportive buy cycle.

**Shannon Waller:** So is it kind of decisiveness? Is that part of it?

**Steve Heroux:** Yeah, quick decisions. We all know this. You probably know this in coaching, right? It's shoot first, then aim. Not, let's just keep aiming for 10 years. But the other part of this, and I learned this from DNA, but the default of a salesperson is that we sell to people the way we buy.

**Shannon Waller:** 100%.

**Steve Heroux:** And we don't have to go into, I teach it in animal types, but a lioness or a lion, for example, they buy on ego. So you would sell to a lion or a lioness based on how this



product or service makes them look to others. Whereas somebody that's more deliberate, right, like an owl, they wanna know all the stats, all the data, all the details, and then give me more. But if you buy like a lioness, you sell like a lioness, that owl's not buying from you. And vice versa. If you buy like an owl, and you need every number on Earth, and that's how you sell, and you're giving this lioness every number, and she's like, enough already. How much is it? And will it make me look better? That's supportive buy cycle. But none of this stuff's taught, right? And so you have salespeople who sell one way, and that's why they only close one out of four sales, because only people like them buy from them. So this is the training that has to be done. Not magic scripts and magic selling systems and methodologies. This kind of stuff.

**Shannon Waller:** Cool. Let's touch on tactical. And I think these are the ones that are more coachable and trainable, my understanding.

**Steve Heroux:** Yes. These are the most coachable. So these are the skill sets. So a couple of different ones, right? Hunting, reaching decision makers, building relationships. Consultative selling is one of the most important ones here. Closing we measure. And this is the one that I actually disagree with, which I think will be sort of helpful for people. Because I think closing is the most antiquated thing in the history of sales, right? It's just so pathetic and awful. Closing is for bad salespeople. So I actually want a low score here. I want somebody to be zero. Because if somebody's a 79 in closing, I know they have a gold medallion and a plaid jacket and they sell timeshares to people. So I don't want the closers. Always be closing. No, no, no, no, no, no. That's what movies did, right? Why this perception of salespeople has been exacerbated so much is because of the always be closing and boiler rooms and Wolf of Wall Street and stuff. But we need to be more like Chris, right? Like Chris Gardner. Nobody knows Chris, which is sad. Chris was what the movie The Pursuit of Happyness was based on. That's a real sales movie. Guts, will, your family, sacrifice. That's a real sales movie. Nobody knows Chris. So we always gravitate towards the slimy slick, you know, because that's what's glorified in Hollywood. So, you know, we need more Chris Gardners.

**Shannon Waller:** Well, it's more dramatic. It's way more dramatic that way.

**Steve Heroux:** Tommy Boy, by the way, is the number two sales movie of all time. Tommy Boy. You all know what it is.

**Shannon Waller:** Good to know. Good to know. And then you also have sales process and sales technology too.

**Steve Heroux:** Yep. And tech, by the way, the way we look at sales technology is broken down in three parts. So do I live, eat, and breathe in my CRM? Do I use it effectively? Because it's a great tool. Do I understand how to sell socially? So, utilizing LinkedIn effectively, or maybe sometimes Twitter, Facebook, IG, whatever, TikTok, but it's usually LinkedIn on this test. And the last one's video proficiency, which I'm giving a talk on this actually tomorrow, but



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that is a competency-based sales skill that is not taught. Everybody's taught features and benefits. And so if you don't know how to effectively sell and communicate over Zoom, you're in really big trouble. And you can look for this deficiency or maybe it's an affliction. I'm not a doctor, but I did discover a medical condition, and it's called resting Zoom face. And some of you know what I'm talking about, because you see...

**Shannon Waller:** Oh, there's another name for it that's not as polite.

**Steve Heroux:** We know the other name, right?

**Shannon Waller:** Yes.

**Steve Heroux:** But as a tip to everybody listening, if you do communicate over Zoom or Teams or whatever, Google Meet, and if you look like you just murdered a family of six, that's not good for you for sales when you look like this on a Zoom. Like, we can see you. Like, it's 2024. You know these cameras, it's not a one-way mirror at the police station. Like, we can see you. But when we show recordings of Zooms for salespeople to their sales leaders and we show them, their heads fall off. They cannot believe the person's doing that because they're not on camera, you know, they're down here, or, you know, the background, it's a bomb one, I mean, it's like, but that's a [crosstalk].

**Shannon Waller:** Or how they're dressed.

**Steve Heroux:** How they're dressed.

**Shannon Waller:** I'm like, dude, I don't care if you've got pajama bottoms on, but have a nice shirt.

**Steve Heroux:** Correct. But that's a skill you want to measure in Sales DNA. For example, if you were belly to belly sales, right, you are going to auto bodies, right, to sell floor mats, then video proficiency, maybe that doesn't matter that much. But if you're in tech or you're in services and you're on Zoom or Teams all day, you better be good at that. And you can't hire somebody that's not. And so that's where some of these things are so customizable. But they apply to one sales role and not another. So why the generic testing thing isn't always good. It's got to be custom and specific.

**Shannon Waller:** This is so great. Between the three different sections, there are what, 21 you said?

**Steve Heroux:** 21.

**Shannon Waller:** 21. And even within those, they have nuances and distinctions.



**Steve Heroux:** Oh yeah. I think at one time I counted 180 different things that we measure. So, you know, part of hunting, for example, I think there are 12 or 14, right?

**Shannon Waller:** Yeah, there's a few.

**Steve Heroux:** Just part of that. So, in the report, for those of you that haven't seen it, I mean, these are, I don't know how long yours, 40 pages long? It's a lot of data.

**Shannon Waller:** 41.

**Steve Heroux:** Yeah, I was close. Now it's like, okay, we got the data, now what do we do with it? And that's sort of the next part.

**Shannon Waller:** Okay, we'll talk about that. It's interesting because you know, most people I work with, capable, intelligent, been doing this for a while. But I can look at these and go, okay, I would probably feel really confident about seven. And then there's like 14 more that I'm like, mm, could use some work. Or not everyone has all... I mean, at 80%, I would be thrilled. That's my usual measure, but it's interesting. So even if you can check some of these boxes, there's way more. And I'm a Maximizer, number one, on my CliftonStrengths. So it's like, if you're into maximizing, both your people and your team overall, and then your results, there's just a lot of richness and a lot of depth here. And I can just imagine hiring new people. Oh, my gosh. Yes, please. But then with your existing team, and it can probably explain what's working. It can probably also give you some, and I know you're super excited about something about to launch, in terms of how to help people get to the next level. You know, hiring is one thing because we're actually always hiring salespeople, but actually working with the existing team to figure out where their strengths and non-strengths are and how they can up their game, presuming they've got the will to sell, is kind of fascinating. Like, I'm just as interested in that part of it, which is kind of cool.

**Steve Heroux:** We use it in our review, right? So we do it differently than maybe other OMG partner. Like it's cool, right? But we've already talked a lot about all the parts, this test is 40 pages long, and there's 200 things you measure. If we had somebody take the test, let's say they're an existing salesperson. And then we just email them the test and go, oh, you read it. That is a disaster. Because even if they score a 98, we, our brain, goes, what about this 2%? So we do not allow that. So anybody, it is just us that takes this. Our team does the one-on-one review with the salesperson to help them understand the results. We would never send it in advance because they will only look at the negative and not all the positive. So we have to preface it and always talk about all the positive stuff. And by the way, in the test, it doesn't say this is a weakness, right? We even fixed the verbiage when we updated the test that says an area for growth, an area for improvement, you know, those types of things. So it has to be given in the right context or people will only find the negative.



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## The Future Of Sales, with Steve Heroux

**Shannon Waller:** 100%. So you are incredibly excited about taking your coaching capabilities to the next level. So describe that because it's imminent and we're excited about it. So, tell us more about that.

**Steve Heroux:** Yeah, it's sort of a four-year, you know, vision that when I first took the test and I was like, man, imagine if we could identify all these things, and then what if we had training to, you know, fix all these things? So that's what we've been working on. We currently have a process right now where we built all the content to do that. But what's imminent is, we will be one of one on Earth that has the capability when somebody takes their Sales DNA test, we will then have AI and machine learning use the results of the DNA test to create a custom learning path specific to that salesperson for them and them alone. And so you can have a team of three salespeople, three different learning paths. A team of 33,000, 33,000 learning paths. That's what we're doing. And part of the impetus behind this, and I should give credit partially to this author, nobody knows who he is. I got introduced to him, thankfully, by my new COO, Brady. The guy's name's Todd Rose, but the book is called *The End of Average*.

**Shannon Waller:** *The End of Average*. It's one of my favorite books.

**Steve Heroux:** You know it?

**Shannon Waller:** Yes, I know it.

**Steve Heroux:** Oh, I am forcing my entire team to read it.

**Shannon Waller:** Yes.

**Steve Heroux:** It is as life-changing for me as *Atomic Habits* was with James. And if y'all don't know this book, please read it. But the gist of it, and one of the stories you probably know about the pilots, but the military, you know, in the '50s, right, they wanted to build and re-outfit all the planes with custom seats and cockpits. And so they tested and measured 4,000 pilots, plus, to come up with this average. So they could just build this average chair and most of them wouldn't fit in it. So just think about the cost of re-outfitting every plane in the military, okay, in the '50s. You can figure out the number. Then, when they started putting the pilots in these seats, out of 4,000, and I ask this to people, how many out of the 4,000 fit in the seat in the cockpit? And it was zero. Zero. Zero. So this, let's get the average, and the average fit nobody.

And so this is sort of what started moving stuff around. And so now when I teach this, I actually teach it, I have a picture of our power seats in our car, and I ask, why is that in there? Why not just have one seat? And you can't move it. And then I ask people, what else is adjustable in a car? Oh, mirrors, temperature.



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## The Future Of Sales, with Steve Heroux

**Shannon Waller:** Steering wheel.

**Steve Heroux:** Everything. Because you can't just make one car with one seat. And unfortunately, that's how kids are taught. That's how sales training is delivered. How leadership coaching is done. You can't do that. You have to have adjustable things for people. And it's one of your 4 C's. You talk about comfortable. If you put someone who's 6'4 into a car and the person who just got out of the car is 5'4, but you told them you can't move anything, it's not going to be a fun ride for them. And that's training. And so we have to build custom training to the person because there's 8 billion people on this planet and 8 billion different ones. And so why would we just jam them all into one training? So that's what we're pretty stoked about.

**Shannon Waller:** I love it. I love the book *The End of Average* because his point is, average is only useful for numbers. It is not useful for humans. His last chapter is brilliant about education and how to customize education, but it's a whole other take on Unique Ability, right? And that's what you love to do and do best.

**Steve Heroux:** There is no fast learner for y'all, right? Oh, she's a quick study. No, she could be a quick study at learning guitar, but maybe not a quick study at baking a cake. Maybe she's a slower learner, right, on learning trigonometry. Maybe she's a really fast learner on algebra. But that's what happens. It's crazy that nobody knows who Todd is. It drives me nuts.

**Shannon Waller:** I know. Actually, I'm hoping he's going to listen to this because I really wanted to get him on this podcast.

**Steve Heroux:** Oh, it'd be amazing. I've reached out to him. I sent him a letter. Todd, call me, bro.

**Shannon Waller:** No, me too. Something he was going to be, then he had a family thing happen. Because I'm like, oh, my God, he's just the best.

**Steve Heroux:** TED Talk is awesome. Like it's just, I would scream this guy to the mountaintops. And thanks, Brady, for it.

**Shannon Waller:** And it will change your brain. It will change your brain about how to think about yourself. Turns out there's no such thing as an average human. They show you pictures.

**Steve Heroux:** Correct.

**Shannon Waller:** And the story about the pilot who just did this incredible rescue, I will not give it away, but it is worth reading the book just for that story, because you will never forget the power of having adjustable seats in planes after you read the book. So yes, I love that you said that. That's one of my very favorites.





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## The Future Of Sales, with Steve Heroux

**Steve Heroux:** It's funny, people go, by the way, they're like, why aren't you promoting your book? I'm like, people are going to find it, right? But Todd's amazing, so I'd rather promote somebody else.

**Shannon Waller:** What is your book? Tell us about it.

**Steve Heroux:** People can look it up later.

**Shannon Waller:** Tell me the name of it.

**Steve Heroux:** Let's just say "contrarian," okay, will be in the title.

**Shannon Waller:** I haven't picked that up at all today. I love it. So Steve, as we wrap up, because you and I, it turns out, can talk forever about all things sales. So what we've talked about is the context for a lot of people with sales. Sales does have a bad rap, and you clearly have a vision for how people can be these superb sales professionals and getting right-fit people into the role and then coaching them up the wazoo in things that can be coached and screened out when there are things that cannot be coached and customizing it so that no one has to go through the same exact thing. So, you know, play to their strengths and mitigate any non-strengths is obviously what we love. So I love it. If you had your druthers, let me just ask you this question to wrap up before I ask how people can find you. What would the reputation of salespeople be? Just in your fantasies where everyone goes through this, you've got right-fit people selling really great products, leaders who get how to work with them, kick-ass sales processes that are just the bee's knees. What does it look like? What would the words be to describe? Give me the new word cloud, if you will.

**Steve Heroux:** Well, the reverse of the ABC, right? Always be closing. Okay, the reverse, right? Of that or the other C, it's a couple Cs. Always be curious and always be conscientious. And if we change it to an H, it would always be helping. I had a meeting yesterday, and it was from another Vistage referral, whatever, and this guy wanted some help with something, and I said, ironically, his name's Will. Funny. And I go, Will, I can't help you, man. He goes, what do you mean? I go, you need help with something we don't do. We don't have that expertise. I got a few intros for you, but we can't help. And he says, "Steve, I've talked to 10 consultants I got referred to. You are the only one that didn't try to sell me something." And he goes, "We will be doing business in the future because I love what you do, but I thank you for not trying to sell me something." Why is this unique? It's like, it's odd to me, right? Just tell people the truth. Then, you don't have to remember what you said. It's not that hard.

**Shannon Waller:** I have a short memory, that's exactly my philosophy. So, helpful, curious, authentic, genuine, honest, caring. This was with the word cloud.



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## The Future Of Sales, with Steve Heroux

**Steve Heroux:** Yeah, don't sell something to someone. Yes, that's what it should be, but transparent, right? I mean, it's not... Reciprocity. Those should be up there. But integrity. The best in the world, all the best women and men in the world, they are those. It's not the word cloud that Daniel showed, right? The best in the world are those things. But it's not sexy. It's not promoted. It's not movie worthy, right? Which is sad. But those are the folks that have amazing lives and clients and I don't know who, I spouted this out in some Vistage talk, but I said, how many of your clients would invite you to their wedding? How many of your clients would show up to your funeral? That's when you know you really have a great relationship with folks. And if you left your company, would they even care? Or would they just keep buying from the next gal or the next guy?

So it's my mission to change that. So... Oh, one more thing, am I allowed to mention a charitable thing?

**Shannon Waller:** Of course.

**Steve Heroux:** So, thanks to Reinvigorated Now, you might not know, unfortunately, my uncle and my best friend passed away on the same day. But Charlie sort of re-inspired me to do this along with Gary Sinise. So I came up with this idea a little while back called the Million Veteran Mission, which is to teach all of our amazing vets how to sell. So we're doing it all for free. It's like a TOMS shoes type of thing is how I think we're going to do it. Where we help a company and they have 12 salespeople that they want us to coach, teach, and they can donate 12 trainings, you know, to vets. So if anybody listening wants to help us support these brave women and men of ours, you know, please reach out. So that's my super exciting part. I forgot to mention.

**Shannon Waller:** That is very, very cool. Thank you. And very generous and very enlivening for people. And it's interesting as you talked about the reverse word cloud, which I think we should definitely make. The people who do that, they might be more stealth. Maybe it's not talked about, but they win. They're like your top [unintelligible] players. They know the deal. They're out there creating value. They don't worry about other people's reps. They just be their best selves and they create enormous value and have a very positive impact because they are helping people solve problems. So if you want to be one of those stealth people, here's a great template on how to do that. So thank you for going in depth and sharing all the cool things and doing the deep dive so people can really understand what this particular profile measures. And I love the categories: recommended, worthy of consideration, not recommended, aka possible dumpster fire. I think that's very, very helpful. So if people want to find you, ask questions, learn more, grab your book, all the things, how do I track down Steve Heroux?



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## The Future Of Sales, with Steve Heroux

**Steve Heroux:** Easiest way is LinkedIn, we're on there a lot. Posts every day, as much value as we can bring to the community. The Sales Collective's our website. And you know Kate, who's incredibly amazing, and so if y'all want to reach out to Kate, of course, she's just Kate@TheSalesCollective. That's her email, or Kate Norton on LinkedIn. She's incredible. I am lucky and honored and can't believe we get to work with people like her. So I'm just excited to be on here and share some crazy thoughts about sales and leadership. And they may not be normal, but that's okay.

**Shannon Waller:** Well, I have a sense that everyone listening isn't really interested in normal and is really interested in an advantage. And those words that you talk about, being curious, conscientious, have integrity, be transparent, be authentic. So I think what you're saying is more, well, certainly that's what I care about, and that's what I talk about. So I think you're going to find a like-minded community. And I know it's really powerful, especially in sales. Sales is still hard to get our arms around. And I think because it's been broken down in so many ways, your points about the sales process were invaluable. And I know something we've worked hard at at Coach, and we're still a work in progress, much, much, much better than it was. So just a really rich conversation, as I knew it would be, Steve. So, thank you. Thank you very much for spending the time and sharing your expertise and passion with us.

**Steve Heroux:** Thanks, Shannon. Thanks, everybody, for listening. Hope to talk to you all soon.

**Shannon Waller:** Awesome.