

## Hope Is Not a Strategy

Sustain what you've built. Be aggressive and proactive. Organically grow new opportunities.

By Brian Kolb :: August 24, 2016

*Hope is not a strategy. Yeah, I said it.*

If your idea of an effective sales career involves comfort, easiness, and “gimme” deals, you're farming the wrong field. Why farming? Because this lazy strategy defies what a good farmer, er, salesperson, should strive for: sustainable organic growth.

Put down the latte and chew on that term for a minute: Sustainable. Organic. Growth.

What in the name of cornstalks do I mean? Here's what I mean: *Sustain* what we've built. *Organically* grow new opportunities. And *grow*!

If you're not in the business of reinventing your business, you're a horse and plow in a world of satellite-guided tractors. Sure, you can farm a field using the methods mankind has always utilized but your competition is plowing a larger field faster and better than you. Guess who makes more at the market?

This logic applies not only to the business but also to its sales staff. Complacency is a death knell in the sales world. Complacency is life support for a brain dead patient. While you're busy deciding where you will have lunch, your competition is reviving patients left and right. Hoping for “the big one” to arrive and get you back on track is not a strategy; being aggressive and proactive is.

In my organization, I commission my sales reps to maintain what we've built while I organically grow new programs, services, and verticals. I give them the seeds; they must till the soil, fertilize the ground, and feed the plants. And this care is not done passively; I demand an aggressive focus, both wide and deep. Create new verticals (deep), and build upon the sustainable, horizontal business (wide). Sounds intense, does it not? You're damn right it's intense. But tell me it doesn't work, given we've seen growth for seven consecutive years. Be decisive when assertive action is needed!

Indecisiveness isn't an option. Indecisiveness is an excuse, and we all know that excuses are like noses: everyone's got one. Not knowing what to do isn't a crime; knowing how to find the answer but not seeking it from qualified personnel is. It's better to be thought a person that asks too many questions than be a person that doesn't ask enough questions and finds



themselves drawing unemployment. The unsure employee that finds a leader and seeks that leader's counsel is an employee that will eventually be an assertive employee. Be a part of rather than apart from.

### Here are six keys to winning that will ensure a successful harvest:

1. **Energy:** create positive energy to thrive on actions and foster change
  2. **Energize others:** motivate customers, prospects, and other sales team members to take on the impossible and enjoy doing it
  3. **Edge:** develop the courage to make tough yes-or-no decisions
  4. **Execute:** get the job done, even through unexpected obstacles
  5. **Passion:** care about customers, prospects, co-workers, and friends winning
  6. **Resilience:** learn from mistakes, re-group, and get going again with renewed speed and confidence
- Staring at an empty field is not farming, and hope is not a strategy.