The Sales Manager’s PLAYBOOK

From Sales 101 to Sales 301:
A Guide for DSR Performance Development

Helping Our Members Succeed
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Introduction

The Ideal DSR

The successful distributor sales representative (DSR) manages a large and diverse sales territory, and excels at building and maintaining relationships with a wide variety of foodservice operator types. S/he is passionate about the industry, organized, dedicated to continued improvement, knowledgeable about products and their applications, skilled in the proper uses of technology, and uses his/her interpersonal skills to work effectively with both internal and external customers.

A well-trained DSR provides a competitive edge for any foodservice distributor. A common training method is to hold sales meetings. These can be effective at reaching the entire sales force at once, and will continue to be useful for training, product education and promoting other company initiatives. There are also other tools and resources available to the sales manager (SM) to train and develop their sales talent, some of which are included in this Playbook.

How to Use the Playbook

The purpose of the Sales Manager Playbook’s is to present ideas and resources in an easy-to-use format for quick reference – to show the SM the recommended “play” depending on the specific coaching moment at hand. The Playbook is designed to supplement the Sales Force Development Appraisal form that is used to regularly document a DSR’s performance progress. The overall goal is to assist the SM in developing all their DSRs, from the onboarding process for new hires to increasing productivity and effectiveness of veteran DSRs.

Organization and Structure

The organization of the Playbook is based on three primary developmental needs of the DSR and the different training methods required for each.

1. **Habits:** Consistent work habits are critically important for success in foodservice sales.

2. **Knowledge:** Successful DSRs need a large and ever-changing body of knowledge.

3. **Skills:** DSRs need a range of “hard” and “soft” skills to perform their jobs effectively.

Some sections suggest different expectations and approaches for different levels of DSR development.
Many of the biggest disappointments in DSR performance can be attributed to a lack of good work habits. Even highly experienced DSRs are not immune to losing their edge when they stop taking fundamental steps toward their goals.

### Pro Tips

Establish clear, minimum expectations for all DSRs in your company and hold everyone equally accountable. While there are any number of good habits for DSRs in any field, some specific ones are especially critical for foodservice sales.

- **Daily call schedule**: Whether electronic or on paper, planning and using a daily call schedule may be the most important daily habit for any DSR, regardless of experience.
- **Weekly review**: Establish a set time each week to review the previous week and plan for the following week. This review will make the daily call schedule more effective.
- **Plan every sales call**: Establish what the objective is for the call, in addition to simply getting an order and collecting money.
- **Update Customer Relationship Management (CRM) daily**: Even if your company doesn’t use a formal CRM system, DSRs should update relevant information into some kind of team reporting tool daily, including leads, opportunities, results, and needs.

### Recommended Actions and Resources

- [How Long Does It Take to Form a New Habit?](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/how-long-does-it-take-to-form-a-new-habit_us_58f8f43ee4b02fd7935213d0) (Huffington Post)
- [6 Sales Habits Salespeople Should Eliminate Quickly](https://www.inc.com/2017/10/6-sales-habits-salespeople-should-eliminate-quickly.html) (Inc.com)
Continued development of DSR knowledge is essential to their continued success and growth. Staying abreast with the latest trends and developments of the overall business landscape, food products, technology, and labor issues related to the foodservice business can foster a deeper understanding of what customers want and need.

**Pro Tips**

While DSRs can bring a wide range of knowledge, their experience level may not be a good indicator of what they know within any given body of knowledge. Establish a minimum acceptable level of knowledge for each of the following areas and test accordingly.

1. Industry Knowledge (General)
2. Industry Knowledge (Regulatory Issues)
3. Company Knowledge
4. Product Knowledge
5. Operator (Customer) Knowledge
Industry Knowledge (General)

Ensure the DSR knows the basics about the foodservice industry, and how aspects of it affect individual customers. It takes continual effort to stay in-the-know on industry issues.

- Food is a major area of cost management to foodservice operators. Be knowledgeable about what’s happening with commodity and wholesale food pricing. Sources include CommodityOnline.com and Bureau of Labor Statistics’ Producer Price Index.

- Keep up with current food trends. What are operators looking for and what are the latest trends in other markets? Nation’s Restaurant News and National Restaurant Association are good sources.

- Labor is another significant cost category for operators. Understand how labor conditions and regulations affect operators’ labor costs, including unemployment, demographics, minimum wage, and healthcare regulations. Resources include local restaurant associations and government sources.

Recommended Actions and Resources (101 Level)

- A DSR new to the industry would benefit from the following resources:
  - IFDA’s Foodservice Essentials online course.
  - Buying groups and vendors may offer courses on industry basics and market reports.
  - IFDA Daily Update free e-newsletter.
  - National Restaurant Association (NRA)
  - Restaurant-industry trade media, including Nation’s Restaurant News, Restaurant Business, and QSR.

Recommended Actions and Resources (201 Level)

At the 201 level, the DSR is expected to already have foundational industry knowledge. However, to advance in his/her career, the intermediate DSR may seek more detailed information from these organizations:

- NPD Group
- Technomic
- Datassential
- Pentallect

Recommended Actions and Resources (301 Level)

To allow the experienced DSR to continue to sharpen skills beyond the intermediate level, management may request that s/he utilize online resources for learning about more advanced topics.

- Nation’s Restaurant News webinars.
- The Cohen Restaurant Marketing Group’s webinars and courses.
Industry Knowledge
(Regulatory Issues)

Keeping up to date on the myriad laws and regulations related to food production, handling, storage, shipping, receiving and serving can be overwhelming. However, it’s critically important for even novice DSRs to know about these responsibilities to keep themselves and your company in full compliance.

Company Knowledge

The DSR is the face of your company in the marketplace. How well do they know your company’s value proposition and brand strategy? What are they key profitability metrics, and which ones are most relevant to the DSR?

Selling the Company Brand

• During new-hire orientation, ensure the DSR knows the full company background and history.

• Create a brief summary of your company’s mission and vision, and expect the new hire DSR to know and understand it. Helpful tips:
  – How to Write a Great Value Proposition (Infographic on HubSpot.com)
  – Crafting an Elevator Pitch (MindTools.com)

• Operators are typically more open to a “marketing” than “sales” approach: The Difference between Sales and Marketing (Tronvig Group)

Category Management

• In initial training, cover the key product categories, important brands, and profitable items your company must promote.

• Teach the DSR about the concept of category management and its importance to company and DSR profitability. (TopRight)

• Refer to IFMA resources on category management. Technomic also has subscription resources.

• IFDA’s Foodservice Essentials online training has a module on working with trading partners.

Recommended Actions and Resources

• Rigorously train and enforce your company’s food safety requirements.

• Establish and train DSRs on your company’s recall procedures. Make sure employees are aware there may be criminal sanctions for non-compliance. If you don’t have a procedure in place, refer to FDA information.

• Consider implementing and training on a HACCP program (NSF).

• Instruct DSRs to review local and state Health Department requirements and regulations for foodservice establishments.

• Consider National Restaurant Association ServSafe® food safety training and certification (or equivalent).

• Monitor local labor conditions, including minimum wage changes and union organizations. Also pay attention to local and state government legislative agendas. IFDA’s resources include information on its website, as well as e-newsletters for members.

• Monitor OSHA regulatory changes and the impact on operators.

• Keep current on DOT regulations.

• Learn how to read and explain product labels on the FDA and USDA websites.

• Foodsafety.gov

• Food Safety News

• USDA Food Safety

• Food Safety and Inspection Service

• FDA Food Defense Program
**Product Knowledge**

Learning about products and categories is an ongoing enterprise for all successful DSRs, regardless of experience.

- Use a check-off sheet that each DSR has received training on each product category.
- Utilize available buying group or corporate product training resources.
- Consider collaborating with cooperative brokers for additional training.
- Suggest DSRs teach others at a sales meeting, either individually or in small teams.
- Ensure DSRs know how to calculate portion cost for operators. There are free calculators available online, including at Free-Online-Calculator-Use.
- Association for Foodservice Representatives has an online sponsored product library.

**Operator (Customer) Knowledge**

Depending on the distributor type, DSRs may call on a wide variety of operator segments (commercial, non-commercial, institutional, retail, etc.), as well as interact with many different personality styles, cultures and languages. The importance of customer knowledge cannot be overstated; to know what’s important to operators, how they make decisions, and what their most pressing needs are.

**Financials**

- Understand finances and P&L statements for an operator. Ten Restaurant Financial Red Flags (Restaurant Resource Group)
- Encourage discussions with customers about what impacts their food costs beyond just the cost of goods. Restaurant Resource Group has tools to understand foodservice financials.

**Marketing and Menus**

- Helping the customer know what food trends are successful can help build relationships. Read trade journals, follow social media, news media, etc.
- Encourage DSRs to maintain copies of current menus for every customer.
- Learn about item consolidation/cross-utilization: 3 Ways to Stretch the Menu Using Cross-Utilization (Gordon Food Service)
- Understand the basics of menu layout and design: The 11 Untold Secrets of Menu Design (Thrillist.com)
Skills

Knowing something (knowledge) and knowing how to do something (skill) are different. This skills section is divided into “hard” and “soft” skills.

“HARD” SKILLS

These are defined as skills whose application applies the same across disciplines. In other words, there is a right way to perform the skill regardless of industry or profession. For a DSR, these include technical skills such as math and computer proficiency. Competence at these skills is relatively easy to measure and training is usually straightforward and structured.

1. Managing Profit Margins
2. Collections and Risk Management
3. Technology and Software Tools

Managing Profit Margins

- Know the difference between gross margin and markup, when and how to use which one. (AccountingCoach)
- Establish profit KPIs (dollars and percentages) and review metrics regularly.
- Pricing should depend on the customer, not the product.
- Measure the profitable categories compared to the company average.
- Manage the profitability (dollars vs. gross margin %) of the delivery (the drop). (Pricing and Profitability Management; Meehan, Simonetto, Montan, Goodin; 2011)

Collections and Risk Management

- Initial new hire training with the company credit manager.
- Training on basic P&L, refresh training annually.
- Instruct the DSR to look for warning signs of a struggling restaurant (Soupfly):
  - Are other vendors cutting them off? Or on credit hold?
  - Are they asking the DSR to hold checks?
  - Is the restaurant operating on a short or limited staff?
  - Has DSR heard of any rent or payroll issues?
Technology and Software Tools

Target technology and software training specifically to the identified skill gaps. There are many resources available online, including low cost or free options:

- Khan Academy (free academic content mostly targeting younger students, but excellent for basic math skills)
- Lynda (extensive subscription-based content targeting business professionals)
- Udemy (learning content hosting service with varying costs by course)

Company-specific Software

There is wide array of specialized software tools that companies use for various sales tasks; most notably order-entry systems and CRM tools. Newly hired DSRs (whether new to sales or hired from other distributors) need to become skilled at using these tools quickly and effectively.

The most proficient users of these tools are often your DSRs. Consider equipping them to train new hires or others who may need help learning these important skills.

- Training sessions to include actual hands-on work, not just watching.
- Consider offering reasonable incentives or rewards to the DSRs willing to take on this training role.

Business Productivity Software

It’s almost impossible for DSRs to move forward in their careers without computer proficiency and knowledge of common software found in most businesses. The Microsoft Office productivity suite (Outlook, Excel, Word, and PowerPoint) has been the most common, but it isn’t the only one. Some businesses choose lower cost (or in some cases free) options like Google Docs, LibreOffice, and OpenOffice. Most of these programs use a similar interface, so learning one makes learning others relatively easy.

Social Media

Operators and their patrons, distributors and DSRs are more connected than ever through social media. Successful DSRs learn how to use these tools themselves, and to assist their customers to market their businesses. Using social media tools well requires a blend of “hard” and “soft” skills.

Recommended Actions and Resources

- SmartBrief on Social Business (free newsletter)
- Getting Started with Twitter (Twitter)
- Facebook Basics (Christine McIvor YouTube)
- Instagram for Beginners (Mashable.com)
- Your Business on Yelp – The Basics (Yelp YouTube)
- Social Media Marketing for Restaurants (Wishpond.com)
- Social Media Marketing articles (National Restaurant Association)
- Social Media Marketing for Restaurants (Restaurant Business)
- How to Use LinkedIn for Restaurants (Groupon.com)
“SOFT” SKILLS

It's not enough for a DSR to simply be able to key in an order correctly, or properly calculate a portion cost. They also need to communicate effectively and connect emotionally to their customers. These require what some refer to as Emotional Intelligence (EQ). These skills are considered “soft” because there can be large differences in how these skills are performed across industries and companies.

1. Selling Skills
2. Handling Objections
3. Developing New Accounts
4. Account Penetration
5. Negotiation Skills
6. Customer Service Skills
7. Communication Skills

Selling Skills

As part of the on-boarding process, whether new to the industry or new to sales in general, a novice DSR may be encouraged to complete one or more sales training programs, such as:

• Foundational Selling (Wilson Learning)
• How to Sell Like a Pro (Dale Carnegie)
• Sales Solutions (Sandler Training)
• Sales Performance (Miller Heiman)
• Buying group or corporate sales training.

Sales Process

Most organizations have a defined sales process that follows a structured, organized system for developing new customers and increasing penetration share of existing customers. For companies that also use a CRM tool, the sales process is embedded in the tool to allow for team tracking, measurement and forecasting.

While the specifics of your sales process may differ from the one suggested below, it will likely follow a similar pattern.

1. Prospecting
2. Making the Call
3. Needs Analysis
4. Preparing and Presenting Solutions
5. Closing

Recommended Actions and Resources

• One-on-one with company trainer or SM for instruction on company sales process, pipeline model and CRM tools. (HubSpot.com)
• The Sales Funnel: Keeping Control of your Sales Pipeline (Mindtools.com)
• Sales Process Engineering (Wikipedia)
• Book: ‘How You Make the Sale’ (McNair, 2005)
• Book: ‘SPIN Selling’ (Rackham, 1988)
• Book: ‘How to Master the Art of Selling’ (Hopkins, 1982)
1. Prospecting

This initial phase of the sales process identifies the best opportunities for potential new customers or new product placements. Prospecting for new customers can be a daunting task for a novice DSR. Make sure DSRs clearly understand which product categories best fit each operator type and segment, as well as your company.

Recommended Actions and Resources
- Classroom or webinar training with a company trainer. Buying groups may also offer these.
- Suggest DSR becomes a National Association of Sales Professionals member and provide reports on participation in learning opportunities.
- 3 Winning Strategies for Prospecting Wilson Learning
- Sales Prospecting: Your Pipeline Could Be Fuller (NASP)
- Are You Missing These Three Key Sales Prospecting Strategies? (Forbes.com)
- Monitor local and national media outlets for new restaurant openings.

2. Making the Call

Once prospects have been identified, the next phase is to make contact with the decision-makers and work with them to identify possible needs. Making new account calls is not a favorite activity for many DSRs, even veterans. However, the skills needed to master this important phase are relatively easy to learn.

Recommended Actions and Resources
- DSR to shadow and observe other skilled DSRs making new account calls.(SalesProBlog.com)
- Train DSR on responses to the most common objections encountered in this context (refer to the Handling Objections section).
- Get referrals where possible ("warm" calls are considerably easier than "cold" calls). (Inc.com)
- Corporate partners and buying groups may offer training classes on making new account calls.
- Cold calling techniques (BusinessBalls.com)
- Nine Tips for Better Cold Calls (SellingPower.com)
- Cold Calling Success: Six Tips to a Perfect Call (Telemarketing Software)
- Active Listening: Hear What People are Really Saying (MindTools.com)
- Learn how to become memorable (Rapid Learning Institute)

3. Needs Analysis (Discovery)

The Sales Interview may be the single most important phase of the selling process. Unfortunately, most DSRs don't spend enough time finding out what their buyer needs and wants, or learning about the decision-making process and evaluation criteria. Too often, the DSR simply offers the products they assume the buyer wants without any context of solving a business need or offering a solution.

Recommended Actions and Resources
- Most books on professional selling will include good information and suggestions to improve interview skills.
- Corporate trainers or buying groups may have helpful resources on sales interviewing.
- 15 Conversation Starters (Inc.com)
- 6 Tips for Better Listening in Sales (InsightSquared.com)
- Check your assumptions at the door (Partners in Excellence Blog)
4. Preparing and Presenting Solutions (Proposal)

This phase usually occurs in the context of understanding what the customer is looking for. Good preparation and planning are essential to success. The primary objective for this phase is to offer the customer products and services that will improve their business and solve problems, and to provide sufficient information so the buyer can make a decision (i.e. to close the sale).

Recommended Actions and Resources

Good presentation skills are beneficial during this phase. Look for any resources that help with those skills.
- Train on sampling and product demonstration skills. It should be more than just “show and tell.”
- Buying groups and some brokers or vendors may have good resources on effective sampling techniques.
- Equip all DSRs with sampling kits and instructions for use. Inspect them when doing field work.

5. Closing

This phase is simply asking the buyer to make a decision based on the offered proposal. It may also include dealing with the buyer’s objections or concerns (covered in another section). Often, closing may simply be getting a commitment to move the process forward (e.g. approving another meeting).

Handling Objections

DSRs can expect to encounter buyer resistance and objections throughout the sales process.

Recommended Actions and Resources

Skill training on objection handling should be included in any sales development program, regardless of DSR skill level. Even 301 level DSRs can benefit from reviewing these important skills and techniques.
- Learn the difference between relevant and “smokescreen” objections and how to respond accordingly. (EvanCarmichael.com)
- DSRs Selling Through Objections (DSR Live)
- Two Useful Tips to Handle Customer Objections (SellingPower.com)
- 6 Techniques for Effective Objection Handling (SalesForce.com)
- How to Handle Objections in Six Easy Steps (TheBalance.com)
Developing New Accounts

Moving a qualified prospect through the sales pipeline to become a regular customer takes patience and persistence. In all types of sales, many sales representatives quit calling on customers after a few calls with no success.

Account Penetration and Upselling

The biggest profit opportunity for any distributor is increasing their market share within accounts they’re already selling. The DSR already has the relationship, has already made the call, and the truck is making the delivery anyway, so why not find ways to get extra case unit sales on the order?

Negotiation Skills

DSRs often need to negotiate with their customers (both external and internal) to resolve differences, create customized solutions, or to capture additional market share. Knowing when and how to do this effectively will prove valuable.

Recommended Actions and Resources

- Set a minimum acceptable number of prospect calls and target account visits by DSR based on their territory developmental needs and their closing ratios. (Partners in Excellence Blog)
- Daily update CRM tool (or equivalent status reporting tool): 5 Ways to Use CRM to Improve Your Customer Acquisition Strategy (IT Toolbox)
- Make sure we’re talking to the right decision makers and stakeholders/influencers: The best ways to find the right decision-makers (Customer Experience Insight)
- Always get a commitment to move the process forward. (Kison)

- Train DSR on how to use category-sales matrix reports to identify suitable opportunities.
- Understand the value of customer retention. (SuperOffice.com)
- How to upsell without turning off your customer (Businessknowhow.com)
- Use data analytics to find opportunities.
- Utilize specialists, brokers and vendor relationships.
- Book: Little Red Book of Selling (Gitomer, 2004)

- Book: Getting to Yes (Ury, Fisher, & Bruce, 1992)
- Book: Getting to We (Vitasek, Nyden, & Frydlinger, 2013)
- Book: How We Decide (Lehrer, 2010)
- Business Schools Teach Negotiating Tactics That Don’t Work (Bloomberg.com)
- Teaching a New Negotiation Skills Paradigm (Washington University Journal of Law and Policy)
Customer Service Skills
Every interaction with a customer is an opportunity to build a relationship with them and differentiate you from your competitors.

The Basics of Good Customer Service
- Three Customer Service Lessons from the Food Industry (American Express)
- Maintain a file of your customers’ business that includes nominations, awards, ratings, industry mentions, and referrals from local online sources. Also include personal information such as birthdays, anniversaries, family members, pets, interests, hobbies, and travels.
- Seek feedback from your customers (Client Heartbeat blog)
- UniPro’s StreetSmart DSR
- Wilson Learning Signature Service™ training
- Complete internal learning curriculum on customer service modules offered by the company (e.g. Syntrio, Mindflash)
- Book: Raving Fans (Blanchard & Bowles, 1993)

Marketing to the Customers’ Needs
- Know What Your Customers Want Before They Do (Inc.com)
- Help with digital marketing efforts (Mondelez International)
Communication Skills (Writing, Listening and Speaking)

The importance of continuing to develop these skills, both personally and professionally, cannot be overstated. Know when to use which tool.

- **Communication Laws – When to Use Email or Pick Up the Phone** (Quickbase.com)
- **Don't Send That Email, Pick up the Phone!** (Harvard Business Review)
- **E-mail vs. Phone: When to Use Them in Sales** (AllBusiness.com)

**Recommended Actions and Resources – Writing Skills**

- [5 Steps for Editing Your Own Writing](https://themuse.com) (TheMuse.com)
- [Emotional content is difficult to communicate well in writing](https://inc.com) stick to the facts. (Inc.com)
- [How to Improve Your Business Writing](https://harvardbusinessreview.org) (Harvard Business Review)
- [Free Improving Writing Skills Online Practice Tests](https://wiziq.com) (WizIQ)
- [Writing Skills](https://skillsyouneed.com) (SkillsYouNeed.com)
- [Business Email Etiquette](https://slideshare.net) (Bob Pritchett Slideshare.com)

**Recommended Actions and Resources – Listening Skills**

- [Listening Skills](https://skillsyouneed.com) (SkillsYouNeed.com)
- [Listening Skills Course](https://trainingcourse.com) (TrainingCourse.com)
- [Listening Skills 101](https://universalclass.com) (UniversalClass.com)
- [8 Activities to Improve Listening Skills](https://busyteacher.org) (BusyTeacher.org)
- [Listening Skills Activities for the Workplace](https://houstonchronicle.com) (Houston Chronicle)
- [9 Things Good Listeners Do Differently](https://huffingtonpost.com) (Huffington Post)

**Recommended Actions and Resources – Public Speaking and Presentation Skills**

- [20 Tools for Creating and Delivering Amazing Presentations](https://hubspot.com) (HubSpot)
- [Presentation Skills](https://skillsyouneed.com) (SkillsYouNeed.com)
- [Blog on the art of storytelling](https://presentationzen.com) (Presentation Zen)
- [Ten Quick Presentation Skills Tips for Outstanding Presentations](https://thesykesgroup.com) (The Sykes Group)
- Suggest active participation in a local chapter of [Toastmasters International](https://toastmasters.org).
- [11 Secrets of Highly Persuasive Speakers](https://lifehack.org) (Lifehack.org)
- [10 Powerful Tips to Improve Your Public Speaking Skills](https://lifehack.org) (Lifehack.org)
- [10 Benefits of Presentation Skills Training for Employees](https://genard.com) (Genard Method)
- Book: [Brain Rules](https://medina.org) (Medina, 2014)
- Create opportunities for DSR to make presentations to other team members (e.g. to introduce new products), company or industry events. Get feedback from senior leaders.
Communicating Across Generational and Cultural Gaps

Foodservice is a diverse industry with operator customers and company team members from a range of cultures, generations and languages. The ability to communicate effectively across this diverse landscape is essential for DSRs to build strong relationships.

Time Management and Planning Skills

Effectively managing a sales territory and book of business requires a disciplined approach to time management and sales call planning. Refer also to the Playbook section on good work habits for additional suggestions.

Utilizing Resources Effectively

- **Time, Talent, Treasure** (Sam Lewis LinkedIn)
- **Research Chefs Association**
- **American Culinary Federation** (look for local chapter)
- **The Culinary Institute of America**
- Local culinary schools, and community colleges with culinary or hospitality programs.
- Most major suppliers have great resources on their websites, most of which are free, for example **Schwann’s Foodservice**.
- Industry Associations (IFDA, IFMA, FSMA, NRA, state restaurant associations, etc.)
- Product marketing co-ops and associations (Dairy Association, Idaho Potato Commission, etc.)
- **Agriculture Education** (Iowa State University Extension and Outreach)
- **Food Institute**
- Buying Groups (UniPro Foodservice, Frosty Acres Brands, Legacy Foodservice Alliance, Golbon, IMA, etc.) have good resources for member companies.

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**Recommended Actions and Resources**

- Establish a mentor relationship with someone in the company of a different generation. (American Marketing Association)
- **Communicating Across Differences** (John T. Gilio Slideshare.com)
- **Millennial Mindset**.
- **Celebrating Hispanics’ Leadership in the Restaurant Industry** (National Restaurant Association)

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**Recommended Actions and Resources**

- Organize a route sheet of your territory.
- Select time within your call schedule for planned prospecting and sampling sales calls.
- Book: **Getting Things Done** (Allen, 2015)
- **Time Management That Works** (TimeManagement.com)
- **Time Management Resources** (MindTools.com)
- **Why Time Management Is Important** (Appointment-Plus.com)
The Millennial Mindset

- **Be mindful of the millennial mindset.** By the time they enter the workforce, millennials have technology to thank for a lifetime's worth of feedback and instant gratification. They grew up being able to go online and track where they were in their classes at any given moment, email their teachers and professors to ask questions, and network with peers anywhere. When you're working with millennials, it's important to understand where they're coming from and the expectations they bring to the workplace.

- **Provide “face time” and feedback.** Millennials value collaboration and want to work closely with people at all levels in their organizations. If you're mentoring a millennial, try to look for projects that you can work on together. Not only will it help you connect with your mentee, it will also make it easier for you to provide the specific feedback he or she needs. When it comes to feedback, remember to say “yes” when the answer is yes and “no” when the answer is “no.” The role of the mentor is to help the mentee grow into his or her role. While pointing out errors can be difficult, it can be easier when you temper it by also providing a positive solution.

- **Mentoring is a two-way street.** While a senior employee can teach a millennial a lot about the culture and politics of your organization, millennials also have their own skills and knowledge to share — in technology and social media, for example. They can also give more experienced leaders a window into the best way to structure a workplace in order to capitalize on their passion, curiosity and creativity. The very best relationships — in life and in the office — are mutually beneficial. It's easier to connect when both parties have something to gain.

- **Connect the meaning to the matter.** Successful businesses not only make money, they also make the world a better place. Millennials want to work for companies that have strong values and make a positive impact on society. A study conducted by Bentley University's Center for Women & Business found that 84 percent of Millennials view making a positive difference in the world as more important than professional recognition. When you're able to connect the meaning of what your organization does to a positive impact on society as a whole, you're more likely to inspire your younger employees.
Glossary of Terms

**ATR:** A developmental process model (Assess, Train, Review).

**CRM:** A Customer Relationship Management system is a data software tool (or set of tools) that provides sales opportunity tracking and budget forecasting.

**DSR:** Distributor Sales Representative is an industry-accepted term referring to an outside sales person. There are other terms used by different companies that mean essentially the same thing.

**DSR Level:** Though not very precise, it may be helpful to group DSRs by experience and effectiveness. We define three ‘levels’ as follows:

1. **101 (Transactional):** This beginning level DSR may be new to foodservice sales and the biggest needs are to become proficient at customer maintenance and to start building a foundation for long-term success.

2. **201 (Solution Oriented):** This DSR has sufficient operator and product knowledge to properly recommend the right products for their customer applications and help their customers solve business problems.

3. **301 (Consultant):** This highly experienced DSR is a trusted adviser to their customers. They are knowledgeable and skilled at helping their customers in all aspects of their business, and are considered valuable assets.

**EQ:** As IQ is a measure of cognitive intelligence, so is EQ a measure of Emotional Intelligent ([EI or EQ for Emotional Quotient - Wikipedia](http://example.com)). Popularized in 1995 by the book of that title, EQ is an important component to success in the ‘soft’ skills of sales.

**GPO:** Group Purchasing Organizations allow for multiple companies (in this case restaurants) to leverage their combined purchasing power to obtain price discounts, rebates or other valuable incentives.

**KPI:** Key Performance Indicators are the business metrics that influence a company’s profitability the most.

**LTO:** A Limited Time Offer is a marketing and promotional device to attract sales on a specific item for a limited time.

**Sales Process:** This defines a structured, organized process of steps/ phases to bring a prospective new sales opportunity (new customer or new product placement) to a successful close. The process is typically built into the company’s CRM tool for tracking opportunities and forecasting. Details and phase names vary between companies; however, most will follow this general pattern:

1. Identification (or Prospecting) qualifies leads and sets the stage for making contact.
2. Making the Call is the initial contact with the decision maker(s) to get permission for additional work.
3. The Sales Interview (or Needs Analysis) is the process to uncover customer needs.
4. The Proposal phase includes the preparation and research, then offering specific solutions (products and services) to meet the buyer’s needs.
5. The Close is asking for the decision or commitment from the buyer (the order).
6. Follow Up is making sure the buyer gets the expected benefits from having made the buying decision.

**SM:** The Sales Manager is anyone who supervises or manages a sales team. This may refer to the Vice President of Sales or Regional or District Sales Manager (RSM, DSM).

**Smokescreen:** This is a sales jargon term referring to a buyer objection that is either not relevant to the decision being asked for or isn’t the real objection. Buyers may raise ‘smokescreen’ objections either intentionally to distract from the real concern or unconsciously for other reason.