

SUMMARY

THE SELL

FREDRIK EKLUND



Summary of “The Sell” by Fredrik Eklund

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If you’ve ever wanted to learn how to sell anything to anyone, then this is the book for you!

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Introduction

Have you ever heard someone described as being “so slick, they could sell water to a fish?” When we hear these descriptions, it’s easy to get the impression that some people are simply born with the ability to sell effectively and others aren’t. But while it’s true that some people are inherently more savvy when it comes to the art of the deal, the silver lining is that everybody can learn to cultivate that sales skill-- just ask Fredrik Eklund! Because according to the author, the fastest way to revamp your sales strategy is to understand that you’re not simply selling a product-- you’re ultimately selling yourself. And that’s why the work you put into your personal development is ultimately your most effective sales tool. So, through these next few chapters, we’re going to look at Eklund’s top tips for success in life and business along with his advice on how to make customers believe in you and your brand.

You Are The Product

Think for a moment about how you engage with commercials. Sure, for most of us, our instant reaction is annoyance as we wait for the ad to stop interrupting the content we really wanted to watch. But beyond that, what elements do you most often notice about a commercial? What makes you feel like something is especially annoying or unbelievable? For most of us, it's the feeling that we're sitting through a snake-oil sales pitch and that feeling is usually motivated by a lack of trust or respect in the source that's selling to us. That might be because we feel like we're being manipulated by someone who doesn't care about our happiness or satisfaction with the product, but simply wants to take our money.

Sometimes, it can also have to do with the appearance of the seller or the overall vibe we get from them, whether that vibe hints that they're untrustworthy, unprofessional, or simply that they don't care about their appearance. But no matter what the reason is, each of these factors contribute to the feeling that we don't want to buy from them. And that's exactly what Fredrik Eklund cautions readers to avoid. That's because he knows that beneath the surface of the question, "What are you selling?" lurks the more complicated answer: "You're selling yourself." To that end, Eklund advocates for making yourself someone that people want. And that can encompass a variety of things from people wanting to be you, to talk to you, or to buy from you, but one way or another, your primary job is to make yourself attractive to your market.

So, how do you do that? Well, according to Eklund, the first rule of sales success is knowing your product. So, while you should definitely know everything there is to know about that house or electric toothbrush or whatever it is you're selling, ultimately that really means that you should know yourself. In Eklund's case, he achieved success by spending a lot of time on identifying his own strengths and weaknesses and learning how to handle them accordingly. By playing to your strengths and improving the areas where you struggle, you can not only get to know yourself better, you

can cultivate the best and most improved version of yourself. Ultimately, it's that self that you'll want to show to the public: the one that's confident and self-aware and genuine.

And that's exactly what Eklund did! Because he channeled his self-awareness into making himself an admirable brand, it wasn't long before he achieved national acclaim and even landed a show of his own-- the Emmy-nominated Million Dollar Listing New York. This soon generated a cycle of success because his fame created the opportunity for his show and his show in turn made him attractive to celebrities who wanted to buy a house from him. But that success wouldn't have been possible without the winning double hit of Eklund's personality and his outlook on life. Operating on the belief that life is 10% what happens to you and 90% what you make of it, Eklund's real-estate game is defined by his belief that you can be anything but boring and you should make your life positive and fun.

That's why his confidence and positivity are the trademarks of his "brand" and the things that most stand out to prospective house-hunters. It doesn't hurt that he's channeled that energy into his signature move of doing high kicks on the red carpet! This audacity definitely helps to set him apart from other real estate agents because... well, how many real estate agents have you met who do high kicks as they're making an entrance? The fact that it's so different is exactly what makes him unique and what communicates to others that he's original and fun.

The ability to channel personal traits like confidence and optimism into a successful business is part of what's known as social intelligence and it's something Eklund relies on heavily. Social intelligence can best be defined as the ability to understand yourself in relation to others and interact in a manner that incorporates empathy and sensitivity. Practicing social intelligence in your everyday life is guaranteed to make you a better human being-- not to mention a better partner, friend, and employee-- but it can also be a great business strategy! That's because everybody appreciates interacting with someone who is authentic and sincere (especially celebrities, who are no stranger to fickle fans). Eklund understands exactly

how valuable that is and that's why he believes that a successful business is predicated on strong social skills.

What's Your Motivation?

No matter what the decision is, everybody has a reason for doing something. Whether that means you took the last cookie because you really, really wanted it or you helped an old lady across the street because you were genuinely worried about her safety, everyone has their own personal motivations for everything they do. So, when it comes to your business, what's yours? For example, are you trying to make your first million before you turn 30? Or are you in this business because it's the reason you get out of bed every morning? No matter what your motivation is, it's important that you identify it early on. Because without a clearly defined motivation, your business and your willpower will flounder and you're unlikely to achieve success.

In Eklund's case, his motivation was to create a better life for himself in the United States because he disliked some pervasive cultural attitudes in his home country of Sweden. Jantelagen-- one of the primary virtues in Sweden-- posits that you shouldn't prioritize individuality over group conformity or feel as though you're better than anyone else. This didn't feel right to Eklund, who knew that he had traits he was proud of and that he wanted people to appreciate. So, he decided to move to America and pursue a career in a culture that would prioritize the values that were important to him.

So, whatever your motivation is, don't hesitate to pin it down and pursue it because this is going to be the heart of your business. And as you seek to identify the forces that drive you, remember that if you don't pursue your own dream, other people will use you to further theirs. So, if you want your hard work to contribute to the goals that matter most to you, it's time to start hustling! In order to effectively discover your motivation, Eklund recommends identifying a role model you can look up to-- someone who embodies the attitudes, values, and lifestyle you want to emulate. And where possible, Eklund suggests learning about your role model by osmosis.

Can you, for example, get an internship with them? Can you interview them? Even if you're working for free, Eklund posits that this experience won't be wasted because face-to-face time spent with your role model can provide you with a valuable crash course in success as you observe how they speak, how they dress, and how they carry themselves-- all of which you can study and learn to emulate. But how do you get that face-time? Well, for starters, Eklund suggests that you abandon email. Because successful people are often inundated with emails, it's easy for yours to get lost in the shuffle and you may never hear back at all. But if you can find a creative way to meet them in person-- or perhaps even something as simple as getting them on the phone-- you're more likely to get your foot in the door.

The Power of a First Impression

You know the old cliché about how you only get one shot at a first impression? Well, it turns out it's a cliché for a reason! In fact, a recent study from Harvard University discovered that most people form their preliminary opinions of you within the first quarter of a second after meeting you-- even judging things like your intelligence and trustworthiness on that first glimpse! It might sound harsh, but we all do it, and that's simply the reality of human interaction. So, how can you crack that first impression algorithm and convey a positive message?

Eklund suggests to start by thinking of yourself as a present. The substance of who you are and what you're selling is ultimately the gift, but if you've ever received a present before, then you know that the thing which draws your interest is the wrapping on the outside. So, when you're getting ready for the day, start by asking yourself what your "wrapping" says about you. Does it say "confident, sophisticated, you want to get to know me?" Or is there a little more left to be desired? The good news is that whatever your "wrapping" conveys right now, you can always easily improve it.

To do so, Eklund advises enterprising salespeople to focus on cultivating a unique sense of style and avoid colors that can make you look dull or washed out, like black and grey. Instead, find colors that are flattering for you and that really make you pop. And last but not least, always make sure you have great hair! The great thing about this strategy is that it doesn't matter if you aren't the best-looking person in the world because this isn't about beauty. Rather, it's about looking like someone who takes time and care with their appearance. Because when you do so, you convey the message: "I think I'm worth time and effort and you should think so too." And the better you look, the more confident you'll feel! This in turn will help you to project confidence and that attitude will encourage others to take you seriously.

To that end, Eklund suggests setting aside 10% of every commission you make for updating your wardrobe and enhancing your personal grooming. (Think skin care, trips to the spa, hair salon, etc). But with that said, he also warns that it's not all about the aesthetic. It's also about genuinely taking care of yourself and that means staying on top of your physical health. This might be harder than buying nice clothes and fixing your hair, but it's possibly even more valuable. So, remember the importance of sticking to your workouts. And if it helps, think of your gym sessions as important meetings that you've scheduled with yourself. If you need that extra motivation, remind yourself that you're the boss and the boss doesn't quit! So, keep that workout date.

And once you've got all the physical stuff under control, Eklund asserts that sharpening your social skills is equally vital. Humor puts everyone at ease, so work on your ability to help others relax with a well-timed joke (and remember that jokes about sex or race are never okay). And last but not least, while you're putting your prospective customers at ease with your charm and wit, don't forget to be a good listener and make them feel that you're genuinely invested in their lives. Giving people your full attention while they're speaking, remembering their names, and remembering little details they mention might seem small, but ultimately, these are big gestures that go a long way towards showing people you really care.

Let's be Friends! (On Social Media)

After you've developed your understanding of your product, it's time to spread the word! After all, ideas are only powerful if they're spread, so start by finding your target market. Fortunately for you, the digital age means that salespeople of today have an easier time spreading their ideas than any generation before, and that's why the best place to start is on social media. However, establishing a social media presence isn't always as easy as it seems; the digital world comes with a set of rules and etiquette all its own and following them is vital if you want to connect with others.

So, for starters, remember that being genuine is the number-one rule. Sure, everybody knows that people only post the "highlight reels" of their lives on social media and that most people don't look that perfect or airbrushed in real life, but that understanding only increases the desire for genuine authenticity online. So, be open about yourself and your message and don't be afraid to admit to mistakes or show the blooper reel of your life and products. Being honest makes you relatable and the more people are able to connect with your brand, the more they'll believe in it.

However, with that said, it's also vital to acknowledge social media's detrimental impact on mental health. Receiving online affirmation can be addictive and before you know it, you might find that social media has a significant impact on your mental health. But just as we shouldn't define our self worth by our interactions with people in real life, the same should be true of our experiences online. So, keep in mind that you won't appeal to everyone, but that's okay; ultimately, you're not trying to. As a business, you're really just trying to connect with your target market and if you learn what appeals to that community and tailor your brand accordingly, then you'll be just right for them. So, try not to worry about winning approval and remember to view social media as a helpful tool that should be used wisely.

Once you've got the right mindset, it's time to work on building your following. Establishing a consistent presence is one of the best ways to gain attention on social media and you do this by being active. This could come in the form of daily or weekly posts-- along with posting frequently on your account's "stories" feature-- and it's one of the ways you demonstrate to your followers that you're out there and part of the cultural conversation. The more active you are and the more you have to say, the easier it will be for your customers to engage. And once you establish yourself as a valid presence, your customers can actually help you with free publicity by sharing your posts, tagging their friends, and spreading awareness about your product to others.

This will also give you a quick and easy way to interact with your customer base because social media has now become an official channel of communication. Where people in "the good old days" might have reached out via a professional phone call, meeting, or email, today your customers are more likely to connect with you via Instagram DMs.

And that's exactly why Eklund cautions readers to remember that your social media accounts should always be run exclusively by you. As a busy business owner, outsourcing a variety of tasks is often necessary, but your social media shouldn't be one of them because it's vital that you post and interact with your customers as yourself. And last but not least, if you have a personal and professional account (and you definitely should!) keep in mind that while you should keep these accounts separate, they should both be consistent in that they follow the same style, standards, and commitment to authenticity.

How do You Actually Close The Deal?

So far through the course of these chapters, we've touched on a few key strategies for building your brand and creating awareness. But once you've done that, how can you take the plunge and actually close that first deal? How do you test your efforts and find out if people really want to buy from you? It turns out that the secret to that last step is pretty similar to the advice Eklund has offered in previous chapters because it's ultimately all about accentuating your positive attributes. Just as you're concentrating on drawing customers in with your "wrapping" and cultivating a brand that centers on confidence and originality, you're going to be highlighting all your positive qualities when it comes to making that sale too. And just like the first quarter second of your first impression on social media is critical, the first ten minutes of your meeting are vital in the same way because they set the tone for the remainder of the entire interaction.

So, in every first meeting with a prospective client, be judicious with those first ten minutes. Use it as an opportunity to give a slightly expanded elevator pitch about what you bring to the table, but make sure your attendees don't feel like you're lecturing. Instead, work your presentation into a dialogue form that invites others to offer their opinion and makes them feel included. Eklund suggests that it might help to think of this first meeting as being like a first date. So, instead of casually asking someone if they "wanna hang out," invite them to try your favorite espresso martini from an eclectic underground cocktail bar. When you deliver your invitation in this format, you're making your pitch clear, direct, and inviting all at once, smoothly conveying your intent to the recipient and leaving little room for miscommunication.

With this strategy as your foundation, you'll establish a sense of equality on both sides and make your client feel respected and at ease, both of which are key ingredients of a successful interaction and a good sell. And last but not least, be aware of your body language and that of your client. If they seem put off or as if they're finding the conversation overly serious, lighten

the mood with a relaxed posture and a cheerful anecdote about something positive, like the funny thing your cat did this morning. Likewise, make sure that you don't give yourself away when you get excited; when Eklund is getting a high bid on a property, he takes care to ensure that his body language doesn't give the impression that he's overly eager.

Final Summary

Learning to sell effectively can be difficult and it's easy to assume that some people are simply gifted salesmen and others aren't. But by taking a few tips from Fredrik Eklund's book, you can learn the art of the sell and perfect your strategies in no time. It's important to start by remembering Eklund's number-one tip: that you are your own brand and product. That's why personal development is so important to your success as a salesperson. So, take time to invest in your appearance and health and always strive for improvement.

It can also help to think of yourself as a present and remember that you're trying to draw customers in through the "wrapping" you cultivate for yourself. This is vital in real life and on social media, and in both cases, you should always concentrate on playing up your positive qualities and striving for a light, relaxing atmosphere that will put your customers at ease.



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