

# Business901

Podcast Transcription

Implementing Lean Marketing Systems

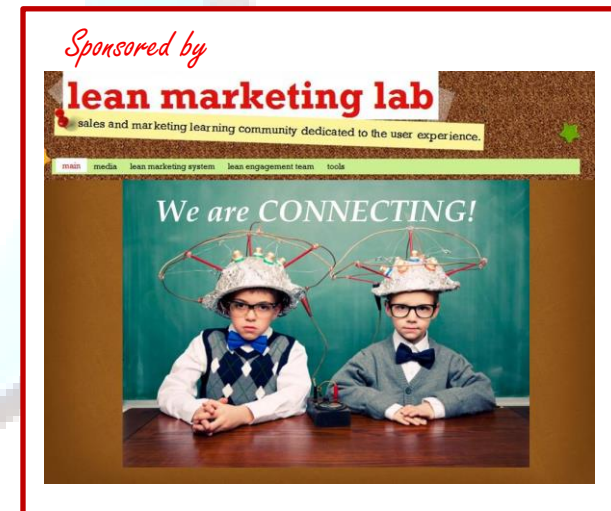


## The Psychology of Selling

Guest was Leigh Ashton

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## Transcription of Podcast

**Joseph Dager:** Welcome everyone. This is Joe Dager, the host of the Business 901 Podcast. With me today is Leigh Ashton, she is the author of iSell and a speaker, trainer and sales coach. She specializes in helping people incorporate psychology alongside technical selling skills – leading to positive changes to their attitude, their approach and their sales results. Her company appropriately named The Sales Consultancy. Leigh, I would like to welcome you and can you start this out with the 20,000 foot overview of the psychology around selling?

**Leigh Ashton:** Joe, it's absolutely brilliant to be here. Thanks so much for inviting me along, and I am always happy to talk about the psychology of selling and how much easier it makes at getting sales. So, the big picture out of you is really important, more important than any sales techniques to have the right mindset. I've noticed over the last thirty years, my time in sales, that the people with the right mindset would always outperform the people who do not. Irrespective of the technical skills or sales, capabilities because it is all about what is going on in your head. If you know that there's a particular activity that would generate you more sales and even though you know it's a great activity to do and could generate you more success and more sales, if your mind doesn't want to do it, it would come out with every conceivable reason to avoid it. You won't think that you're avoiding it because you say all along I am making these call or doing this activity and all this sales activity, but you'd be avoiding the one thing or two things or more that actually would help you to be more successful in sales.

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**Joe:** Sales is still very personal, right?

**Leigh:** Oh, without a doubt and I think in the last four or five years it has become more personal. I think gone are the days of transactional sales. Our buyers of today want to be treated as individuals, even people are buying online. You are not to look an organization like Amazon, who uses your name even though they are selling billions of products all around the world. You know; it's just incredible. People want that personal interaction.

**Joe:** Tell me, how did you ever choose to specialize in this area of sales?

**Leigh:** Well, I got into sales in my early twenties, and I really loved it, Joe. It just happened to me so naturally; I didn't know what I was doing right that made it so easy to generate sales. I was quite happy until they promoted me to Sales Manager. Don't get me wrong, I was really thrilled to be promoted but that's when the frustrations set in. What I noticed is that there was such a mix of results, and it wasn't really dependent on the effort people put in. So, someone who has put in lots of efforts could fail, and someone who's making it look really easy could be generating lots of sales. The interesting thing is, when I tried my best to say, "This is my strategy, this is what I do and it is really easy and it's really fun". Some people go, "Wow, Leigh, you've opened my eyes on the way you do it". Some people would say, "Wow. Leigh, that's great. Go away and not do it". And some people would say, "That won't work for me".

I became really curious. What was it that make people take action and not? That's when I started down my path of psychology. I started to read every book I could get my hands on.

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I started to look to people who work in the psychology of success such as Tony Robbins and Brian Tracy. I really got interested in what goes on in people's mind causing them to be proactive and take action. Some years later, I decided to start my business specifically around that area. Eighteen years now, I have been working with small and large organizations. Many know and understand that what to do but just are not doing it. Or, my team has lots of sales training that has been fantastic but they are just not following through. So, my passion is to change people's – I guess, frame of reference around selling so that they feel really comfortable and confident to sell themselves, their ideas, their products and services in a way that's right for their personality and the way that's right for the customer.

**Joe:** When we talk about the psychology around selling, are we talking about the seller, or we're talking about understanding the buyer?

**Leigh:** It's both really Joe. First, you have to understand how your mind works because we all have our own specific preferences. The things that make us tick were all different. Although we are all human beings, we operate in slightly different ways. You have to understand how your mind works so that you have more control over it, rather than it, controlling you.

Once you understand that, you can begin to understand that everyone you come into contact with also has very specific preferences. Once you are able to identify those preferences, it means that you can tailor your communication to suit them so that they really hear what you've got to say, so that you also write questions to get the information you need in order to match their needs most.

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**Joe:** There are typical personality traits covering a wide spectrum and sales people cover as great spectrum. Is there a model personality trait that makes for a good salesperson?

**Leigh:** That's an interesting one because my belief is that every single person can be a successful salesperson. If you've got two ears and a mouth, you can sell. All of us are selling every single day, all day long; we just don't call it that. Every time you give your point of view, you want the other person to be convinced of your point of view – that's selling. Every time you do that, you're selling. Every time you're giving an opinion, you're selling because you're trying to get other people to agree with your opinion. Now, that said there are certain traits that if they are naturally in an individual, they would probably be more likely to succeed in sales. It doesn't mean that people can't learn those skills.

I think the one that is most important is rapport. If you can have rapport with people, then you're more likely to be successful in sales. If you're able to have empathy with the other person's point of view, you're more likely to be good at generating sales. If you are very keen to help people, then you're going to be more successful in sales.

People have the misconception that sales is about taking. I'll give you this then you give me nothing. Well, actually sales is all about giving. As soon as you realize, "How can I help this person? How can I make life easier for them? How can I take their problem away?" as soon as you focused on that, you'd become more magnetic to buyers.

**Joe:** This doesn't sound revolutionary but, has sales changed much in the last years?

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**Leigh:** Well, it isn't revolutionary. In fact, Joe, it is common sense but it's not that common. What happens is when people go into a situation where they're with the prospective buyer, there are many salespeople that do what I call, go into their own space. They start thinking about, "Am I saying the right thing? Am I doing the right thing? Is this person buying in to me? Do I impress this person? What commission is going to give me the best deal? What product do I really want to be selling right now? What is my sales manager thinking?" They start worrying over the place. Why do I how do they know they start whirling over the place? If they start telling the customer the benefit on what they think the relationship will bring in a way that we do this, we do that, we've been around all this length of time and we've done this for lots of customers before and that really makes it difficult to get the sale. As soon as you start whirling, the person who's listening to that, start evaluating everything. Inside they are saying, yeah that's good, no not interested, yes quite interested. They are evaluating everything.

Let's say, for example, there are ten things brilliant about your company, your product and your service. You think it's really important to get those ten bits of information out, and you're telling to the other person, if five are irrelevant to them, then that makes your offering only fifty percent perfect. So, when we start talking about price, you open yourself up to negotiations because anything would actually be interested in fifty percent of what they offer in any case. So, the best scenario is to wait or start talking to them about their problems, what they really want, and what they are trying to resolve. I want you to list all that information so then you talk to them about the bits of your product or service that meet their needs. Only once and they say, you know what, this is perfect, and you're less



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likely to get any kind of objection on the price because you've offered them the perfect solution. By that time that you can say and in addition to that, you made a great decision put everything you wanted to do and in addition to that you'd get this is and this.

**Joe:** How does this lead to better conversations? Because what it's all about is the conversation with the customer, how do we create better conversations out of this?

**Leigh:** For me, it's always with open questions – who, what, when, where and how, are great leadings to open questions but you absolutely must listen to the author. It's really crucial when you ask the question then you don't start answering the questions for the customer. I can't tell you Joe how many times I hear this. Even though salespeople know that closed questions are not great, you'd be amazed how many of them do that. When you ask an open question; there are two that are more powerful to me that would get you more information, and they are what-questions and how-questions. What questions give you criteria that are important to the other person. How questions give you the process that's important to the other person; how they do things, the process they use.

Many salespeople, these days, ask why questions especially when they lost the deal, and they want to know why the person has gone elsewhere. Now, why-questions should never ever, ever be asked in a sales conversation. As soon as you ask the why-question, the other person become very defensive because actually what you are asking is justification for the previous discussion. When you do that, the person will defend their corner, and they will give you an emotional response rather than factual one; one that kind of meets their needs and alleviates their pain that might have told you that your offer is very poor to

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somebody else. It's much better if you want to know the reason you didn't get the deal to say, "What was it about the other company or the other offering that made that perfect option for them?" And then, they will tell you the criteria that made them choose that offer. If you ever get the opportunity to sell to that person again, you will know exactly what criteria you are going to offer them and make it a much better proposition. Another question you may ask is what made our offering less than perfect, and they will tell you where the shortfall is in your own offering.

**Joe:** I think that's interesting that you address the Why questions because it's not necessarily being a problem solver in sales. Is it?

**Leigh:** No, absolutely not. For me, why-question is one that you lead to the coaches and the counselors; the therapist. They want to get to that deep level that really you do not want to make your perspective buyer feel uncomfortable. That's an absolute no-no.

**Joe:** We are talking about the soft side of sales; behaviors, psychology and everything, but how do these things apply in this digital world that we're living in?

**Leigh:** That's a great question, Joe. There are studies already that showed the more personal websites and platforms that use a lot of 'YOU' language. How do you do, what problems do you have and what you want to achieve are getting much more traffic, and people actually are staying longer on those sites and viewing more pages. It's really important to know that online is all about generating relationships and whether they buy online or whether they did some follow up process; it's really important to make that online



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experience one that is good for the person who is coming to the site.

**Joe:** I should really understand some of what the psychology is selling when I am designing a website or creating that user persona?

**Leigh:** Yes, for sure. Absolutely! Think about when you write copy for website or email marketing. Make sure you use plenty of 'YOU' language. Write as if you are speaking to one person. I know that lots of people think that grammar is very important, but I think the best result occur and in my experience of being in sales for thirty years and running my own company for eighteen years is the best results come from copy that is very conversational, much more than grammar. So, I used a lot of ... to create a pause, and I will write in a very conversational style.

**Joe:** Most of us are somewhat reluctant to sell. We want everybody just to click to buy something versus having that conversation. How do we step out of that?

**Leigh:** Most people I come across have a negative association to sales. You don't find it so much in sales teams because they have chosen that profession. You still find internal barriers that stop them from being superstars. There will be deep-rooted beliefs around what selling means to them, or they have deep-rooted beliefs around who they are as an individual. For example, somebody believes they are not very good on the telephone; it doesn't matter how much they practiced, it doesn't matter even how many successes they have because they have a belief that they are not very good at selling on the telephone. Every time, they have a bad call that would go into the bank to prove their belief. Every

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time they have a good call they would just say that was a fluke.

It's really important to identify what beliefs you have because ninety-five percent of what we do is completely unconscious sometimes. It's very, very difficult to find those limiting beliefs. There are many processes; there are lots of coaches whom you can work with. But in my book, I talked about a very simple process that I learned many, many years ago. Once you've identified what's stopping you doing something with very simple techniques you can use to get rid of those.

I guess my biggest recommendation to anyone is if they are avoiding the activity, if they are not doing something that they believe is a good thing to their business or for their sales, ask yourself a question, "What stops me from doing that?" Then go and find yourself a quiet corner where you will not be disturbed, no laptop, no phones, nothing and just write down every single thing that pops into your head; even if it doesn't make sense, even if it has nothing to do with sales. When you get to a point when you think, "That's it. I am done." ask yourself a question again because I call that the first blank spot. What you've done is dump what is most consciously in your awareness. I've always recommend people to go to your second blank spot because what comes off to the second blank spot is normally very interesting observations of self. Once you've identified what your beliefs around yourself as a salesperson or business owner, then you can start to get rid of those beliefs that getting away success.

**Joe:** Well, you bring a point because I always find something else is due before I have to start cold calling. Once I started, it's not all that bad. I just have to build me up to want to

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do it. Is that common?

**Leigh:** Oh, it's really common. But I would say Joe that your avoidance is quite mild because you actually eventually pick up the phone and then you enjoy doing it. Some people are so terrified of cold calling that they never pick up the phone, they would rather do anything else and now say, "I now have time to cold calling." and when you breakdown a day without doing anything they can in order to avoid that. Now, this is the acronym that we use at The Sales Consultancy, which is IPA, Income Producing Activity. Everyone should spend at least a further time on Income Producing Activity because if you don't, you can't generate invoices that cause the money to come in. So, Income Producing Activity, my definition, is anything you do to form relationships up until the point they say yes. When they say yes, that becomes customer service, and that is not Income Producing Activity.

We're talking about picking up the phone, writing emails, and it could be things like your social media, making sure that you have a presence online, sharing your expertise in blogs to build your credibility. That's all Income Producing Activity, but the main Income Producing Activity in terms of generating sales is definitely a two way conversation. You can hide behind emails; you can hide behind social media, you can do lots of stuff online but if you're not having any two way conversations, you're not maximizing your sales opportunities.

**Joe:** That's a great way to put it. I always put it that business is still done with a handshake.

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**Leigh:** Yeah, for sure. People buy from people.

**Joe:** Tell me about your book. I see that the front cover has Brian Tracy's comment on it which is very impressive.

**Leigh:** You know, Brian, he has influenced me for as long as I can remember. From those early days as a frustrated Sales Manager when I couldn't figure out what was going on. He gave me such amazing insights. When I was writing the book, a friend of mine said, "If you could have anyone give a testimonial for your book, who would it be?" I said, "Brian Tracy" but I haven't got any idea how would I ever get Brian Tracy. I don't know him, so he said, "If you really want Brian Tracy, there's only one way of making it happen. You've got to manifest these things". I spent the whole week on social media saying, "Does anyone know Brian Tracy? Who could introduce me to him? I really would love him to look at my book." When I started to think, "Are there a couple of people that I thought might be reasonably close to him?" I emailed them and said, "Could you introduce me?" and they said, "Let's have a conversation about it." I spent a whole week doing that and then on the weekend, I went to a workshop; I attended. I still love attending workshops and increasing my learning. In this workshop, the speaker is talking about he is writing a book with Brian Tracy. I nearly fell off my chair. So, when we're on break, I said, "Can you help me?" and he said, "Yes, sure." So, he emailed Brian. Then Brian and I emailed each other. I sent him my book, and he wrote that amazing testimonial. He's just a superman. I'm just so delighted and fortunate connecting with him in that way.

**Joe:** Tell me what's in the book that you wrote?

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**Leigh:** Oh yeah. That was your original question. I am sorry about that. The book takes the reader through a step by step process to understand yourself, to understand how your mind works, to understand what to look for in others so that you can connect with them on a deeper level and some really practical sales techniques that I've generated over thirty years in sales. We ended each chapter, space for you to write three actions that you are going to take as a result of reading that each chapter. I made a book of really simple, really practical and by the end of ten chapters, so by the end of the book, you've got thirty actions that you can take. If you are a Sales Manager or leading a team of salespeople, the final chapter is all about how you use what's in the book not to generate sales but how to manage, how to motivate and inspire a sales team.

**Joe:** These are tools that a Sales Manager can address with his whole sales team?

**Leigh:** Yes, for sure and in the same way that would buy is very different. Every member of your sales team is very different. I can say that when I am delivering training in the corporate world that you must really think of your sales team and your customers because they have to buy into you, they have to buy into the company. The more fortune they are, the more likely they are to succeed.

**Joe:** What's your website? What's do you have upcoming and how can someone learn more?

**Leigh:** Now, in our website, we have lots of videos, we have lots of articles, so it is really

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easy to go and get lots of free stuff on our site. We really think it's important to give value to everybody that shows up there. We've got a report, 'The 9 Biggest Sales from States that you could be making and for Sales Managers or Team Leaders, we have 'The Second Biggest Mistake Your Team Could Be Making'. We have lots of stuffs we place on social media: Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, and Slideshare. We really are very, very active. So, if people want to find out about us and how psychology of sales could really increase and leverage their sales success then short stop on our website would give them plenty to get them started. And there is, of course, the book and we have DVDs on the website.

**Joe:** The best way for someone to contact you, your website and could you tell us your URL please?

**Leigh:** Yes. It's [www.sales-consultancy.com](http://www.sales-consultancy.com).

**Joe:** Leigh, I appreciate very much. Is there anything you would like to add with this conversation that maybe I didn't ask?

**Leigh:** No. I think you've been a joy to talk with, and I really had a fun time. I really appreciate you calling me on, and it's been great to share my thoughts with all of your listeners.

**Joe:** I would like to thank you Leigh. This podcast is available in the Business901 iTunes store and Business901 website. So, thanks again.



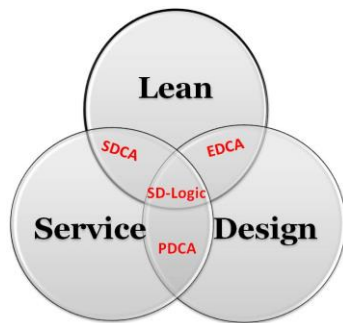
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**Leigh:** Thank you, too. Bye for now.



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Joe Dager is president of Business901, a firm specializing in bringing the continuous improvement process to the sales and marketing arena. He takes his process thinking of over thirty years in marketing within a wide variety of industries and applies it through Lean Marketing and Lean Service Design.

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