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# THE POWER OF MOMENTUM

Meeting the demand for daily improvement requires F&I professionals to create and capitalize on their own momentum.

BY RICK MCCORMICK

A train travelling 55 miles per hour on a railroad track can crash through a five-foot thick, steel-reinforced concrete wall without stopping. That same train, starting from a stationary position, won't be able to go through an inch-thick block in front of the driving wheel.

It's never the size of the challenge that is the problem. It's a lack of momentum. That's why we tell fresh new salespeople the best time to sell a car is right after you just sold one. It's not that their skills are better because they just sold a car. It's that their confidence, attitude and perspective are fine-tuned and ready for another positive customer interaction. The encouraging and amazing thing is that we can create our own momentum. The discouraging thing is

we can also break it.

In "The Momentum Effect: How to Ignite Exceptional Growth," author J.C. Larreche goes to great lengths in research to prove one basic point of success: Successful companies and individuals are not satisfied when things are going well and just "ride the wave." They live by this motto: "First build your wave, and then ride it."

So the question we must answer is, "How can an F&I manager find a way to deliver continuous, exceptional growth in production and customer satisfaction month after month?" There are specific things we can do to create forward momentum, and our focus should be on the activities that will make this happen. Let's take a look.

## ACTIVITY NO. 1: INTERACTIVE TRAINING THAT CHALLENGES AND STRETCHES

Interactive training causes you to step outside of your work world to further develop your skills. Just showing up every day to work does not create momentum. Actually, it can do the opposite. How do you create momentum? It's basic physics. According to Newton's laws of motion, a body that is still, through inertia, will stay still. A body in motion will tend to stay in motion. So to create momentum, you must get into action.

Training serves two purposes: First, it challenges you to grow and stretch your abilities. When you are developing your skills instead of just demonstrating them, you are creating forward

momentum. The steps taken daily may appear to be small, but overtime they can move your production and skill level forward by great amounts. Spending 20 to 30 minutes daily working on your skills will not dramatically change your production levels in a month. However, if you do this daily for six months, the increase will be amazing.

The demand today in the F&I office is consistent improvement. With all the challenges F&I pros face, that can seem daunting. However, small efforts repeated daily make the changes almost unnoticeable yet assured. One key ingredient in momentum is a high level of confidence. When you are learning new information, new ways to illustrate the value of your products and gaining insight from others on the strengths and growth areas of your presentation, you become more confident that you are more prepared than ever. That is creating momentum.

### ACTIVITY NO. 2: READING TO ACCESS THE WORLD OUTSIDE OF YOURS

One malady easy to contract in the F&I office is “tunnel vision.” The multitude of tasks we are responsible for can cause us to become so immersed in our world we neglect to reach outside of ourselves to further develop our abilities.

Reading teaches, motivates, reminds, and corrects. It also makes you smarter, increases your vocabulary, forces you to think, and can correct counterproductive behavior. Reading is not only a principle for F&I managers, it has been a life principle for me for decades. My five grandchildren know I never say ‘No’ to books. In fact, of all my investments, the money spent on books for myself and my family continues to be one of the best.

One example is “The Speed of Trust: The One Thing That Changes Everything” by Steven M.R. Covey. We all know if we have built trust and credibility with our customers, they are more likely to listen to and embrace our information. However, this book made me aware that, when a trusting dialogue is taking place, it quickens the pace of the process.

That’s why we need to spend our time dealing with true objections instead of digging through false ones that slow down the process. Hey, we are be-

ing pressed as never before to shorten the time we spend with each customer. How do we increase profits and do it in less time? Utilize the speed of trust.

You simply cannot read this book and not be driven to reevaluate your process to make sure that you are building high levels of trust with every customer. Reaching outside your world through reading can facilitate adjustments to your process that enables you to help customers at a higher level. They benefit, you benefit, and so does your dealership.

### ACTIVITY NO. 3: NEVER BREAK YOUR OWN MOMENTUM.

The temptation is great and many have to deal with the consequences of it. What is it? Taking your success for granted. When you have reached a new level of production, it is easy to feel like you have arrived, and the tasks that got you to that point are ignored while you enjoy your success.

I will never forget the words said to me after a record month of production: “Your potential is furious with your production.” Your production may be your best ever and better than everyone else around you. Everyone may be ecstatic with what you have accomplished. Yet the goal of every F&I professional is to maximize their potential. Nothing is wrong with relishing in your accomplishments. But never let that cause you to discontinue the very efforts that helped you reach record production levels.

That message delivered to me was tough to digest at the time. Looking back, it helped me make the commitment that I would never be the one responsible for breaking my momentum. I would spend my days performing tasks that create momentum and lead to consistent improvement. From that day forward, I stopped competing with others and started competing with myself.

Regardless of the production numbers I knew of others around me, or that I may have read about in industry publications, I learned the only person I needed to compete against was myself. If my skills and production consistently improved over time, I could surpass all others. And most importantly, I knew talent had very little to do with what I was able to accomplish. It all had to do with

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

# THE SPEED OF TRUST

The One Thing That Changes Everything

Foreword by Stephen R. Covey  
Author of *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*

STEPHEN M.R. COVEY

WITH REBECCA R. MERRILL

## RICK'S RECOMMENDED READING LIST

- *See You at the Top* by Zig Ziglar
- *Good to Great* by Jim Collins
- *How to Win Friends and Influence People* by Dale Carnegie
- *Start With Why* by Simon Sinek
- *The 15 Invaluable Laws of Growth* by John Maxwell
- *The Speed of Trust: The One Thing That Changes Everything* by Stephen M.R. Covey
- *Selling With Noble Purpose* by Lisa McLeod
- *Little Red Book of Selling* by Jeffrey Gitomer
- *The Psychology of Selling: Increase Your Sales Faster and Easier Than You Ever Thought Possible* by Brian Tracy
- *It's Not Rocket Science: 4 Simple Strategies to Master the Art of Execution* by Dave Anderson

my level of commitment to improve.

The power of momentum cannot be underestimated. But it is not an elusive force of nature that we have no control over. We have to accept personal responsibility for creating momentum or breaking it. Many F&I professionals across the country are committed to the art of creating positive and forward momentum. Their skill level and income increase year over year, and what they have accomplished is amazing. Rest assured, they are not finished growing, and neither am I. In fact, I have some reading to do. ■

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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