

SALES STAR



## Craig Garber: Attracting Success in Sales and Business

[By Akbar Ali]

When it comes to sales, Craig Garber is a man who has seen it all. Since the beginning of his career in 1990, he has spent significant amounts of time “in the trenches” observing and learning under the many hats he’s donned in the sales industry, first as a headhunter, then as a property and casualty insurance salesperson, financial planner, and life insurance agent, and now as a marketing consultant, publisher, and copywriter. He also doesn’t hesitate to own up to his early mistakes on the job and the innovative methods he’s developed since to make sure that others are spared from repeating the same.

Currently, Garber publishes *Seductive Selling*, a monthly offline newsletter directed towards business leaders and entrepreneurs and read in nine countries. With his many years of experience serving as the springboard to his launch into success, he is now an expert on teaching others how to “attract” business rather than chasing it down in frequently futile efforts, a common mistake which he believes is a waste not only of time but of effort and resources as well.

Garber’s entry into the sales industry was based on two key factors: his ability to shape his own career and the plain fact that it was something he enjoyed doing. It also didn’t hurt that his professional skills were not available on the market in large quantities.

“I got into my current field of work because I wanted more control over my destiny and because I enjoyed it,” he says. “Not that I’d work for free, don’t get me wrong, but I enjoy nearly every moment of every day writing, marketing, publishing, and selling. I wanted free time with my wife and kids at *my* discretion, not whenever I could ‘get it.’ Also, since it’s a small niche field with only a few dominant players, I knew because I was good at it, I’d be able to charge a lot of money for my services once I was established and had a few successes under my belt.”

His college years in New York are memorable not only for the formal training they provided him but also for the personal challenges

he would face and later overcome on the difficult path to success.

### Q. What do you do for fun?

**A.** *Nothing* beats alone time with my wife...second to this, in no particular order, are a good cigar, good coffee, and a good book...bass fishing on my lake... music...working out...traveling to places I haven’t been before or that are far away...and lying in my hammock looking at the lush environment and the wildlife around my lake.

### Q. What CD is in your CD player right now?

**A.** Tool — *10,000 Days*.

### Q. What is the last magazine you read?

**A.** *Sherman’s Travel*.

### Q. What is your favorite TV show?

**A.** *Entourage*.

### Q. Who is your role model?

**A.** I wouldn’t say I have a role model per se, which frankly makes being a successful entrepreneur somewhat difficult (Am I wrong? Am I right? Only one way to find out, I guess — try it!), but I definitely wouldn’t be where I am today without the incredibly strong support and encouragement of my wife, Anne, and her unyielding belief in me and my children’s unconditional love. I have met a few specific people over my lifetime, and I’ve learned little bits and pieces about different parts of life from each of them.

“I went to school at UCLA — the University on the Corner of Lexington Avenue. That was the nickname for City University of New York — Bernard M. Baruch College, which was located on the corner of 23rd Street and Lexington Avenue in Manhattan.

“To be honest, I had a pretty difficult childhood, and even though I was *very* hardworking and fairly bright, I had no guidance about how to use any of my educational or academic tools to benefit my life. I graduated from high school (I went to a pretty well-known high school, the Bronx High School of Science) with high honors and then went to a state university in Upstate New York. I was very immature socially and totally unprepared and unskilled in dealing with people — especially people who didn’t grow up in the inner city like I did.

“As a result, I had a terribly difficult time in school and wound up getting kicked off campus for possession of drugs. A good friend of mine from high school had been kicked out of his college in Boston for gambling, and he was enrolling at CUNY (City University of New York) and suggested I do the same. I did, and at his encouragement, since I was ‘good in math,’ I enrolled in accounting. Funny how different events that happen to you during the course of your life usually happen for a reason. The thing is you can’t connect the dots moving forward. You have to live them first, and only then can you go back and connect them.”

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It was during this transitional period that Garber was able to retake control of his life and turn things around to where he was able to position himself for the kinds of achievements of which he was inherently capable.

“At CUNY I really turned myself around, got off drugs entirely and focused on academics and worked like a dog. Working a part-time job 30 hours a week and going to school full-time, I graduated with a 3.6 GPA.

“Again, things got rough at home, and as a result, I didn’t really know what to do after college, but I knew what *not* to do and what I *didn’t* want to become. And sometimes this is as much a valuable lesson as anything else you’ll ever learn. To me, I just looked at college as my ticket out of my family, out of the misery and poverty of the Bronx, and on to some sort of new (and definitely better) adventure. I always just knew I was meant to do more with my life than become another one of the zombie-like blue-collar workers I was surrounded by. I wanted to control my destiny, not be controlled by it.

“It took me a long time to figure out how all this works, but even through all the bad times I had (divorce, losing my sons to my ex-wife in a custody battle, then eventually getting them back again, bankruptcy, growing up with little guidance and a *big* chip on my shoulder), somehow I never gave up those thoughts that told me I was meant for more. My current wife (we’ve been together almost 15 years now) encouraged me and pushed and supported me to follow my dreams. It hasn’t always been easy, but there again, nothing worthwhile usually is, right? And with the success I now enjoy, I’d say the long climb up the mountain was certainly a worthwhile one.”

After graduating with a degree in accounting

### Q. What makes you laugh?

**A.** My seven-year-old daughter’s got a wicked sense of humor, and I love watching “guy” movies with my sons, like *Borat*.

and passing his CPA exam directly out of college, Garber spent the next three years working as an accountant, where he procured valuable information about business, finance, and, of course, sales. Soon thereafter he took the plunge into the sales industry.

“After bouncing around in various sales jobs, I became a financial planner selling life insurance, managing assets, and doing estate planning for high-net-worth entrepreneurs. I was moderately successful at this and opened my own firm after working for a large national corporation for five years. While working in this profession, I discovered emotional direct-response marketing, and it turned out that I was very passionate and inherently skilled at it. I had an intuitive knack for this as I’d put a lot of effort into understanding what makes people tick over the course of my life.

“I was listening to a self-development tape one day, and the speaker said something like, ‘You know, most people will allocate enough time for their family life based on what their job or their business will allow them. Why don’t you do it the other way? Why don’t you decide what kind of a recreational lifestyle you want and then figure out what kind of a job or business will support that?’

“That really bothered me because I thought to myself, ‘Sure, I’m going to hang out with my wife and kids, sit on my ass and smoke cigars all day long, and go bass fishing, and then the money’s just going to pour in, right?’

“What was really bothering me about this, though, was that I couldn’t figure out how to do what the person on the tape was suggesting, even though I wanted to, desperately! What kind of business could I run, and how could I structure it so that I had *so* much business...and that I was in such a high demand that I could live my life like this? See, having a question you can’t answer — for me — is like having some kind of a medical issue you can’t cure. You feel powerless, and that’s probably one of the worst feelings in the world.

“So this question was always nagging, nagging, nagging at me in the back of my mind. Once I realized I was good at copywriting, and once I realized the wide variety of experiences I’d had in dealing with all sorts of people could *help* me, I began to apply and use it in my marketing to start *attracting* prospects instead of chasing them down, and things slowly but surely began falling into place.

“I’m one of those guys who can get along just as well with the CEO of a Fortune 500 company as I can with the guy who empties the CEO’s trash at night after the place shuts down. And understanding this — knowing how to push people’s emotional ‘buy buttons’ — allowed me to excel at marketing once I learned how to use this skill to its greatest leverage in business.

“Again, that’s just another example of connecting the dots and how you can’t do it moving forward — you can only look back and put all the pieces of your life together and then complete the puzzle.”

Having worked in a variety of industries and positions with a multitude of businesses and corporate leaders, Garber has naturally had a wide array of experiences over the years which have been memorable not only because of the success he has enjoyed but

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also because of the important lessons he's learned from them.

"I worked with the legendary (now deceased) copywriter and direct-marketing great Gary Halbert, and he sent me a note one day after I wrote a particularly difficult piece for him, telling me, 'I think you have more natural talent for writing direct-response copy than anyone else I've ever met. I've never said this to anyone else. You are *great* and 100% ready. Actually, I think you might be better than me. You are a genius at this!' I thought he was joking, but he wasn't — he was dead serious.

"After this he basically launched my career and began promoting me. I was fortunate to start at this business at a very high level — partly because of his endorsement, partly because I had the talent to back it up, but mostly because I had the balls to go out and use the same marketing strategies on my own career as I tell my clients to use. It's interesting, but just like the old adage 'The cobbler's kids never have any shoes,' most marketing 'gurus' who consult others are like timid mice when it comes to their own marketing. They're desperate for clients themselves. I've never been timid in anything I do, and in this case it helped me a lot, allowing me to 'leap' up several rungs of the ladder instead of slowly ascending them one at a time. Robert Ringer talks about this in his book *Winning Through Intimidation*."

Of his many career achievements, Garber lists the following as those of which he is proudest:

"My offline newsletter, *Seductive Selling*, is now read in nine countries, and its subscriber base is growing *very* rapidly.

"I will be finished with my *Seductive Selling for Entrepreneurs* book soon and self-publishing it.

"I recently wrote a piece for a client of mine that generated a 42.7% response on the very first mailing. I don't think I've ever even *heard* of numbers like that before — and I've definitely *never* heard of something like that on the first mailing alone.

"For another client of mine in the very competitive residential mortgage area, I created a few marketing pieces that increased the number of leads he was getting by over 50% and increased his profits by substantially more than that because the quality of his leads increased as well."

Garber also runs three different coaching groups whose demand is growing. But his professional achievements are not the only things he feels proud about. His personal life has also witnessed some breakthrough moments.

"My wife and I no longer have sleepless nights and stress worrying over money and finances," he says. "It's nice to not have to worry about what the prices are on the restaurant menu anymore or whether or not you're going to make enough money to pay your bills this month — or will you need another cash advance off your credit cards. We've had some pretty lean years, but those are all behind me now.

"I have achieved my goal of living the kind of lifestyle I want. I work out of my home office overlooking my fishing boat on my lake, and my home is surrounded by citrus trees and a beautiful quiet forest. Although I do struggle with striking a balance between work and pleasure, I am definitely working less as time goes on and taking more time off.

"After *years* of never going away, we now go vacation a few times a year and stay at top resorts in beautiful locations. I've been able to eliminate all the poverty-conscious and scarcity thoughts I had inside my head and

instead replace them with a 'sky's the limit' mentality. And I haven't changed who I am. A friend of mine once told me that for most people money doesn't change who you are — it just brings more of who you are out of you. So if you were a good person before, you'll still be a good person, and sometimes even more outwardly good and happier.

"Anyone whoever told you money doesn't bring happiness was probably broke, because the truth is money does make you happy, especially when you work like a dog for it and have loving family to enjoy it with."

One individual whom Garber is careful to credit with inspiring him in his career is the renowned copywriter Gary Halbert:

"I was very fortunate to work [with him] for six months — truly one of *the* sharpest and brightest marketers I've ever known — and until he passed away he was recognized as one of the most creative and clever copywriters and marketers ever. Most of the successful entrepreneurs I know have all 'gotten permission' to do something, and Gary gave me permission to become a copywriter, and in fact, he actually endorsed me and launched my career. (You can read more about this story in a product I recently released called *How to Make Your Dreams Come True* at [www.kingofcopy.com/dreamscometrue](http://www.kingofcopy.com/dreamscometrue)).

"Another very successful entrepreneur I know, who to this day is a good friend of mine (we usually go fishing together at least once a month), showed me that those foolish messages I had shoved into my head when I was a kid — about how rich people were no good and how money was evil — were wrong. He showed me that you *can* be a kind and caring person and have *tons* of money, and in seeing him, it allowed me to become wealthy myself. Before this I was somewhat held back by all that misinformation and



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by all those negative messages I'd heard throughout my childhood."

Garber's advice to young and aspiring sales professionals and business leaders is to maintain key relationships and to persevere— just as he did when there were so many reasons not to.

"You may have to go through several to find one, but finding a *good* mentor is the smartest thing you can do. The money you invest in their wisdom will pay off tenfold if you in fact listen to their advice and take action.

"Invest in self-education, and then make sure you follow it up by taking action. The

world is full of brilliant people who are dead broke simply because they were either afraid of success or afraid of failure, and they never took action on anything they learned. Look at it this way: if the *best* baseball players only get a hit three out of every 10 times at bat, then an entrepreneur who succeeds once or twice out of every 10 times they have a go at a project is probably going to be very successful. Don't look at mistakes as failures; look at them as 'tests.' So if one doesn't work, you just move on to the next one.

"Also, many times people quit without realizing how close they are to success. They quit when they're on their opponent's 10 or 20 yard line, and as you know, those last few

yards are always the toughest. Sometimes all they need is a subtle change in the way they're handling things, and it makes all the difference in the world. That's where a good mentor comes in.

"And lastly, make *sure* you're good to yourself. Reward yourself with days off and time spent with loved ones. Even though you may feel pressure to keep working, especially in the beginning, when you take time off, your brain and your body recharges itself physically and emotionally, and your head fills up with new creative ideas to use."

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