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## Sometimes, you just have to go to work!

by Greg "Heff" Heffington



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Managing Partner

Spotlight program:

"Think Straight—Talk Straight" . . . Guiding Principles for Leaders



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Recently I was reminded of something I know but had slipped from my consciousness. It's the value of hard work and focus. That sounds a bit crazy in so many ways. I will try to explain.

We at JAM Consulting Group have built out so many tools and programs that help sales organizations and professionals, team leaders, and individuals become more effective and efficient in almost every aspect of their business. Helping them understand who they are, their strengths and weaknesses, how to describe or identify value to their clients, and how to say it so it is heard

and so much more. All of which have been built around behavioral science principles known to be effective in a way that makes the task more easily attainable.

We get kudos from our clients confirming the effectiveness of our programs, tools, and coaching regularly. It's through our insights and coaching that helps to solve our client's challenges. That feels good to us and provides the validation we value as a consulting group.

But . . . it's not enough!

- Relationships matter. Absolutely!
- Clearly identifying the

benefits of your product or service. Essential!

- Opening any conversation around your product or service with the desired outcome in mind. Critical!
- Being able to differentiate your product or service from your competition. Necessary!
- Your ability to articulate your value. Without question!

We help with all of that and more. But . . . it's not enough!



"The Coach"  
James A. Morel  
President

## Barriers to Performance by Jim Morel

I am a fan of the Olympic Games and the performances of its past stars. Jesse Owens, four golds, at the 1936 Berlin Games is my favorite story. But the story of England's Roger Bannister, who on May 6, 1954, broke the four minute mile barrier with a Time of 3 min 59.4 seconds, is considered the Holy Grail of athletic achievement.

Bill Taylor wrote "for years milers have been striving against the clock, but the elusive four minutes had always beaten them. It had become as much a psychological barrier as a physical one." (continued on page 5)

## #1 Skill for 2019

By George Amidon

In our work with clients we interact with well-seasoned professionals as well as individuals new to the business. In either case the skill set that comes up time and again as critical to their success is the ability to communicate. Recently I presented at a conference and during a Q&A session with a senior executive from a large Broker Dealer, he was asked what skills would be most critical to getting into the industry and finding success. He responded that that while technical expertise was needed, he felt most entering the industry were well versed with technology. But where he saw the greatest need was the ability to communicate and the power of persuasion.

I read an article from David Fisher from January 22, 2019 in LinkedIn it was titled "The 6 Skills That Will Make You Stand Out in 2019". Below are excerpts from the article which again emphasizes that the skill of communication as the number 1 need in 2019.

### From the article:

The future of the sales profession seems to be changing daily. New technology and rapidly changing customer needs are combining to reshape the foundations of the success as we move into the heart of the 21st century.



So it begs the question:

How can you stay relevant and excel as a sales professional? What skills will keep you on the path to success?

Luckily, the [LinkedIn 2018 Emerging Jobs Report](#) that came out at the end of 2018 has some answers. It makes a compelling case that salespeople will continue to fulfill a valuable role in the near future. And in an increasingly high-tech world, it points to the value of some decidedly old-school skills as the key to sales success.

### Soft Skills Are in High Demand

With the rise of technology, it would seem that time spent developing "hard skills" would be useful. It's easy to think that future-proofing your sales career would come from product knowledge and getting the latest industry certifications. Likewise, learning the ins-and-outs of AI, CRM platforms, and marketing automation stacks seems an obvious place to focus your professional development. But those areas will only get you so far.



George Amidon CRPC  
Managing Partner

Industry knowledge and digital fluency are critical, but they're just a start. When you dive further into the Report, you'll find the section entitled "Skills with the Biggest Skills Gap" listing. These are the skills that have the highest demand and the lowest supply. They indicate what employers are looking for and what they are having a problem finding.

And what are employers looking for? People skills. The soft skills that revolve around human interaction and the less quantifiable aspects of business are highly sought after. In fact, they represent six out of the top ten areas with the biggest skill deficiencies. They include: Oral Communication, People Management, Social Media, Business Management, Time Management, and Leadership.

The skills that are going to drive success for salespeople are the ones that [\(continued on page 3\)](#)

## Let's talk about leadership...

By Kaleen Barbera



Kaleen Barbera CPC  
Managing Partner

In last month's newsletter I reflected on a presentation I had given at Rice U on the entrepreneur as a leader. Shortly thereafter, I had the opportunity to deliver a leadership workshop to a group of students. Whether we are young, old, experienced, etc., leadership is relevant. The concept of leadership warrants much attention, not only because it is a key topic on which JAM focuses, but also because organizations

fail or thrive as a result of decisions made by leadership. But leaders aren't superheroes; they have personal lives, emotional baggage, flaws... This is not a white paper, it's not a thesis, it is the combination of research, insight, and observation. Leadership is critical for our world and should be discussed as often as possible.

On the May cover of "Time" magazine [\(continued on page 4\)](#)



## Sometimes, you just have to go to work!

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Wait, I know, let's all just work smarter not harder! We get that, we all do. It's one of the primary driving principles we look at in building out our programs and tools. In other words, make the "task" easier by following sound behavioral principles and adapt approaches accordingly. The expectation by doing so is to make the sales process more comfortable for everyone (including the client), help make management more effective and make communication more efficient.

But . . . it's not enough!

In today's competitive and time stressed world it would seem for any effort to be effective (sales, management, or leadership) we all must work smarter **and** harder.

It's not necessarily about the total hours worked although I know in my case it wouldn't hurt to put more hours

into the effort every day. It also has to do with being more focused when I am working on those things that will benefit both my clients and me. That is an idea everyone I talk with or coach has identified as a challenge. It's not easy.

In the end it comes down to focusing on what you can control. That is a mantra repeated every day by every manager, leader, or sales person I know. The challenge is identifying exactly what that means in a way that is clearly understood by the audience or individual. Last week it became crystal clear when an individual I coach, mentor and consult shared his thoughts on this topic with another member of his team. Brad's description was so spot on, in my opinion, I felt I had to share it with you all.

"So, let's focus on what we can control.

- Attitude: Chin Up, chest out. Find your excitement. Excitement is contagious. Find your value-proposition.
- Work Ethic: Working harder is one thing, but it means nothing without working smarter as well. Working smart is built on Process and Preparation.
- Process: Build a disciplined process and stick to it in both good times and bad. This will help you keep your head above the clouds and identify when to focus on certain opportunities given market conditions or availability of resources.
- Preparation: You have two ears and one mouth. The first step in sales is listening - you can't sell if you do not know what the client is looking for. When you are prepared, you can then lean on your work ethic and process.

Keep Fighting,"

Obviously, Brad is in sales. Certainly, any if not all of these are valuable regardless of your responsibilities. Take the time to  
(continued on page 4)

## #1 Skill for 2019 (continued from page 2)

focus on human-to-human interaction. And those who are best at being "human" are going to be in highest demand.

### The Six Skill Gaps You Can Work on Today:

When focusing on your professional learning, it's important to focus on these soft skills. The market is making it clear they want professionals who can master these less-quantifiable business areas. They are harder to define and quantify, but they are key to driving business.

The six soft skill areas that the report lists are key places to focus. As the report outlined, "people with these skills are hired

faster than people without these skills." Whether you are trying to get a new sales job, keep the one you have, or move up in your organization, it's valuable to grow in one or more of these areas to move your career forward.

### 1. Oral Communication

The report makes it clear: "Oral Communication remains the skill group with the biggest shortage in nearly every city across the country." The ability to communicate is the foundation skill of a salesperson. Many things can be outsourced or automated, but conversations can't be. It's especially hard to replicate empa-

thetic conversations that create trust, uncover challenges, and secure commitments. It's more than just being a good talker. It's about creating a connection and moving a relationship forward.

*"We still live in a world where people want to talk to other people — it's human nature. Use yourself as a judge. Do you want to talk to a person or an automaton? Ultimately, this comes down to basic supply and demand. The ever-growing reliance on tech as a tool is creating a talent pool that isn't very good at an essential skill and this means excellent  
(continued on page 4)*

## #1 Skill for 2019 (continued from page 3)

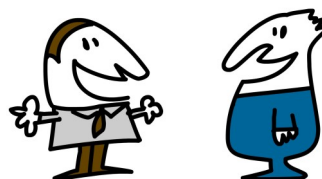
*communicators will be increasingly in high demand as this gap continues to widen.” — Douglas Vigliotti, author of the Salesperson Paradox*

To see the entire article you can access it at <https://business.linkedin.com/sales-solutions/blog/sales-reps/2019/01/the-6-sales-skills-that-will-make-you-stand-out-in-2019>

At JAM we believe the art of conversation is critical and when interacting with a prospect or an existing client the conversation needs to be centered on the client and what it means to them. We see at times a tendency to broadcast what the salesperson has to offer or what they do making the conversation more about them and less about the client or prospect.

To learn more about the art of conversation reach out to us at [www.jamconsultinggroup.com](http://www.jamconsultinggroup.com)

As always – Good luck and Good selling!  
George



## Lets' talk about leadership...(continued from page 2)

you'll see Greta Thunberg. I've followed Greta via Instagram the past several months. If you haven't heard of her, Greta is a 16-year-old Swedish girl who, over the past year, has done something incredible. She has been standing up for what's right, not for herself, but for the world. Recently, this young woman was able to compel thousands of people around the globe to protest for climate change. This one young woman has already received a nomination for a Nobel Peace Prize. Take that in for a second... a 16-year-old girl: cover of Time, Nobel Peace Prize nomination, spoken in front of Parliament, met with the Pope, addressed the United Nations, Ted Talks, etc., etc. How is it she is accomplishing so much and gaining so much support?

In her Ted Talk in Stockholm ([https://www.ted.com/talks/greta\\_thunberg\\_the\\_disarming\\_case\\_to\\_act\\_right\\_now\\_on\\_climate?language=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/greta_thunberg_the_disarming_case_to_act_right_now_on_climate?language=en)), Greta discusses the fact that she was diagnosed with Asperger's at age 11. She explained that people with Asperger's don't see things except in very rigid, black and white terms. It also prevents filtering, so she is incapable of

lying. Intellectually, she's very smart. She's not concerned with her acceptance by others, which is ironic considering that literally thousands now celebrate her. She also is afflicted with selective mutism; meaning that she only speaks when she has something important to say.

So, what can we learn from people like Greta on the topic of leadership? To me, Greta represents 2 things: what leadership means, and what it takes to become a leader.

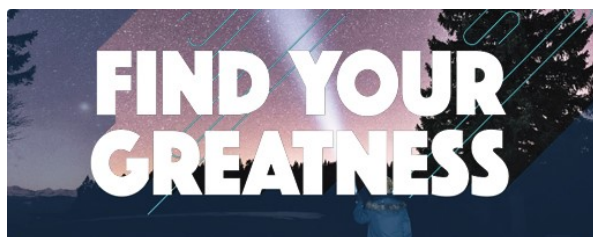
First, the defining line between people who manage and people who lead can be summarized in 2 or 3 key elements. Passion for what is right for all, selflessness, and action. A true leader's agenda is not driven by self-interest, but instead a universal truth that binds all together. A leader sees a vision others cannot, and most of all they act, or make a decision to not act. The point is, they are not passive. There are other elements involved here also, such as structure for taking action so that people can support the leader and the cause (exactly what Greta did in organizing a global strike), accountability (practicing what is being preached; she only takes public transport, doesn't fly, and is vegan), and relentless pursuit to the cause, done so in a way not driven by fear, but by acceptance.

When you look at any historical figure that one might define as a leader, do those same qualities in any way not resonate?

Second, what does it first take to become a leader? (continued on page 5)

## Sometimes, you just have to go to work!

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think about what these "principles" mean to you and your work and the impact they could have on your business if you adopted them as they are described. And, as always, we are here to help you sort out how to implement these ideas into your day to day.

BE well,  
Heff

## Let's talk about leadership... (continued from page 4)

The leader needs to be free to move forward with clear thinking, without their own personal interests or saboteurs interfering, and in order to do this, they MUST know and understand themselves. Greta is a great example of this. Once she was able to understand her afflictions, they provided her the insight to overcome them. Before she was diagnosed, she had fallen into a deep depression, whereby she stopped speaking and stopped eating for 2 months. This happened shortly after she learned about climate change. To her, the lunacy of seeing that humans were creating an existential crisis yet weren't talking about it or doing anything about it, combined with her Asperger's, literally sent her into a silent tailspin. Once the afflictions were identified, they could be dealt with and now they are the structure by which she makes impact.

Greta's story is unique and maybe even extreme, but it also shows that no matter what issues we deal with, any one of us can grow to be a leader. I challenge you to observe the individ-

uals in the world that are making impact for the GOOD of others. What is it they can teach you? What have they overcome? Next, when was the last time you self-reflected? Do you know what is holding you back? And what is your plan to begin overcoming your saboteurs and move forward as a leader in your own life? Finally, what kind of help do you need to answer these questions and provide a way for you to be successful?

Know yourself. Understand yourself. Your weaknesses can become your

strengths. Only then can we develop into individuals who can truly be leaders. I'm sure you have your own very distinctive views on leadership. You may even be looked at as a leader; many of our clients and colleagues are. You may or may not agree with what is what I've written. Either way, let us know what you think. We can learn and grow from each other, so we invite your feedback.

Kaleen  
[Kaleen@jamconsultinggroup.com](mailto:Kaleen@jamconsultinggroup.com).



## Barriers to Performance

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AS BUSINESS LEADERS, WHAT DOES THE BANNISTER STORY TELL US?

To optimize business performance requires both a sound business model (to overcome physical barriers) with a plan to overcome the psychological barriers.

WHAT WE KNOW

Performance does not move in a straight line as defined by the intricacies of the business model alone. As leaders we tend to focus solely on the physical barriers; such as revenue projections, cost, bottom line, marketing, and competition. What we fail to recognize are the psychological barriers that impede performance. For example, mergers, acquisitions, and organizational change, can present psychological barriers to your team and organization. The leaders inability to function effectively in any change environment or mitigate the (continued on page 6)



Roger Bannister

## Barriers to Performance

(continued from page 5)

psychological fallout to employees is faced with a psychological barrier to performance.

As leaders we begin to address the psychological barriers with an awareness of our leadership attributes and psychological saboteurs. We like to say here at JAM Consulting "if you can't lead yourself, then you cannot expect to lead others."

For more information on leadership, visit our website.

[www.jamconsultinggroup.com](http://www.jamconsultinggroup.com)

"The Coach"

Jim Morel



"However ordinary each of us may seem, we are all in some way special, and can do things that are extraordinary, perhaps until then... even thought impossible."

**SIR ROGER  
BANNISTER**

competitor  
**RUNNING**

**JM**

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### Why JAM Consulting?

*The key differentiator in today's markets comes down to people: their ability to utilize good judgment, communicate effectively, and present themselves in consultative and collaborative ways.*

*Clients we work with know that it's the capabilities of their people that drive numbers, and say they appreciate that we have positively influenced, educated, and impacted them in ways that continue to tip the scales in their favor.*

*By developing and delivering research-based training and coaching programs specializing in 2 key areas: sales effectiveness and leadership development, we become a key partner in helping organizations, teams, and individuals become the best version of themselves, ensuring long-term growth, profitability, and sustainability.*

[www.jamconsultinggroup.com](http://www.jamconsultinggroup.com)