



Ace Your Office Presentation

Say “I’m excited” to yourself before you begin. Speakers who did this came off as more persuasive and confident. Source: *Journal of Experimental Psychology*

Four Steps to Six Figures

David Johnson was working hard but falling short—until he learned to focus on his goals.

IT WAS ALWAYS MY DREAM TO WORK at my family’s insurance agency, and after college, I joined the sales force. At first things were great. But when we lost a big account, my clientele dried up overnight. And I had no clue how to rebuild it.

Over the next three months I made only \$800 in commissions. I was constantly cold-calling potential clients, with no luck. So one day I just broke down crying, telling my dad I hated the job. I was failing.

That was a turning point for me; I knew I needed a new approach. I needed concrete goals.

I made a profile of my ideal client and reached out to my contacts to target people like that. For the first time, I was working smart. My sales picked up within a week. The next year, I was invited to join an industry group for top salespeople.

I’ve realized there are two things everybody wants: more money and more free time. I’m lucky enough to have earned both. My life is balanced, I no longer spend my days cold-calling people, and I’m happy.

BIO

David Johnson, 39, Suwanee, GA

JOB

Life insurance agent

STARTING SALES

\$50,000

CURRENT SALES

\$500,000

TIME FRAME FOR TURNAROUND

Less than a year



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Work with Purpose

Put in all the overtime you want—without a clear target, you’ll never hit your mark. Here’s what David Johnson has learned about getting ahead.



THINK BIG, ACT SMALL

Break large, long-term goals into small weekly tasks. If your boss rewards creativity, send in 15 ideas every Wednesday. “If you’re always looking to next week, you’ll have constant forward momentum,” Johnson says.



ESTABLISH A SYSTEM

Many recurring problems can be solved by creating procedures. For instance, if you often fall behind on filing expense reports, set a reminder to do it every Tuesday at 2 p.m., whether or not you really need to.



IDENTIFY WHAT WORKS

The key to progress and personal satisfaction is to know what you’re bad at, good at, and great at. If you focus only on your weaknesses, you’ll shore them up but still be weak. So focus on your best strengths.



SHARPEN YOUR PITCH

Before a big meeting, list your key talking points, along with two sentences to say about each. “Ad libs are for amateurs,” Johnson says. Rehearse the night before, and you’ll have confidence in the moment. —LILA BATTIS

Icons by CURTIS JINKINS (top), MICHAEL BRANDON MYERS (right side)