

# INSIDE

## BUSINESS

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## The Canterbury Sales®

### Effective Sales Management to Avoid The Ruins of Chichen Itza

By Andy Gole

The Mayan ruins at Chichen Itza in Mexico are marvelous to behold. They include a beautiful pyramid that can predict the solstices, a planetarium and a huge playing field that looks like a Quidditch pitch in the J.K. Rowling Harry Potter series.

The Mayans had a very advanced civilization that included one of the three independently invented written alphabets; highly developed knowledge of astronomy, architecture and math; and sophisticated medicine.

Other advanced Central American civilizations – including the Aztecs and the Incas – declined after the Spanish colonists and soldiers came to the Americas. Not so with the Mayan center at Chichen Itza. It declined hundreds of years before the Spanish arrived.

History identifies these outstanding features of the declining Mayan civilization:

1. Advanced knowledge was held by a small number of priests, mathematicians, etc. To the common Mayan, it was esoteric knowledge – magic.
2. When things went bad (e.g. droughts, bad crops), the Mayans resorted to human sacrifice. Instead of a policy of woman and children saved first, the leaders protected their own declining position.
3. When the last rulers imposed unjust burdens – including taxes and continuing the practice of human sacrifice – the people

started abandoning the cities. Eventually the civilized center fell into disuse.

Businesses that repeat past behavior, without thoughtful analysis, are susceptible to inducing the ruins of Chichen Itza. This is particularly so with respect to new business development, where ownership is grappling with an uncertain future demand and may need radical new ideas.

With rapidly changing markets, plagued by declining life cycles, ineffective sales management produces the ruins of Chichen Itza, where:

1. **Sales are in decline** – There is no sense of urgency, by either prospects or salespeople.
2. If there is a selling system, it is **esoteric knowledge**. Salespeople don't understand why they should follow the system. Often top management and/or ownership have contempt for sales (no wonder sales are off).
3. Sales leadership – overseeing the decline – often sets **objectives that protect and reward themselves** but don't align with corporate success.
4. Innovative outsourced solutions are dismissed out of hand.

To prevent the “sales ruins of Chichen Itza,” business owners must follow author Michael Gerber's injunction and work “on the business,” not “in the business.” Ownership

needs to seek best practices and constant improvement on an ongoing basis. One way to do this is by participating in peer advisory group meetings, with an organization like Vistage.

Another is through inviting a sales consultant to help install sales best practices, especially needed in new business development. An effective sales and sales management system can:

- Boost sales 10-20 percent or more, with a limited financial investment
- Create or manage prospect urgency and commitment
- End sales force blackmail
- Provide concrete measurable assessments of each opportunity, answering the question: Is this prospect viable, or wasting our time?
- Teach and reinforce fearless behavior by the sales team
- Become a scalable core asset, increasing firm valuation 20 percent or more
- Help sales force recruiting

Looking to the future, working on selling best practices helps businesses avoid the sales ruins of Chichen Itza.



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Andy Gole has taught selling skills for 17 years. He started three businesses and has made approximately 4,000 sales calls, selling both B2B and B2C. He invented a selling process, Urgency Based Selling®, with which he can typically help companies double their closing or conversion ratio. Learn more about Andy's method at [www.bombadillc.com](http://www.bombadillc.com) or by calling him at 201.415.3447.