

How to Drive Revenue and Do Work that Makes You Proud

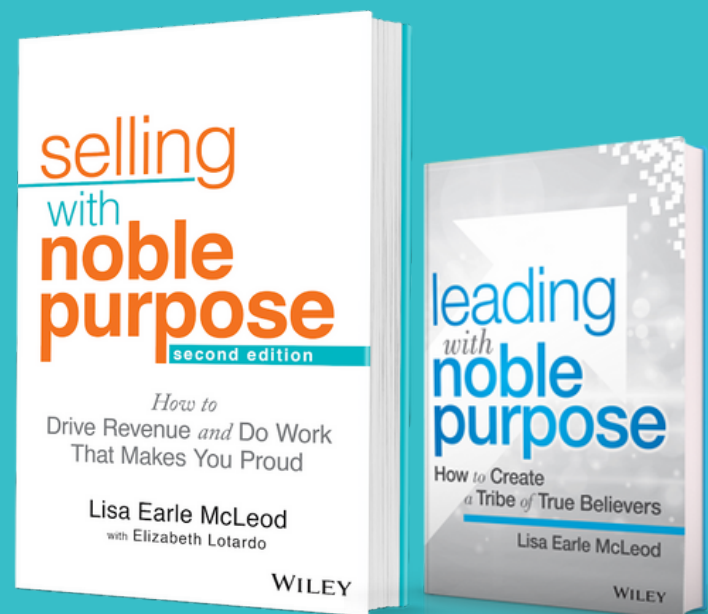


Lisa Earle McLeod is the global expert on purpose-driven business. She is the author of five six books, including the bestseller: *Selling with Noble Purpose: How to Drive Revenue and Do Work That Makes You Proud*.

Lisa has spent two decades helping leaders increase competitive differentiation and emotional engagement. Her research has documented how organizations with a purpose bigger than money actually make more money, and they experience greater customer and employee retention.

A powerful speaker who has keynoted in 25 countries, Lisa has also made appearances on the Today Show and The NBC Nightly News. Her firm's work has been featured in Forbes, The Wall Street Journal, and NPR. Her clients include organizations like Volvo, LinkedIn, Salesforce, and Roche.

Lisa's other books include *Leading with Noble Purpose: How to Create a Tribe of True Believers*, which has been heralded as a breakthrough book that shows leaders how to win the hearts and minds of their teams and customers.



A decade ago, I was part of a consulting team asked by a major biotech firm to conduct a six-month double-blind study of its sales force. The purpose of the study was to determine what behaviors separated top salespeople from average ones. The study revealed something no one expected: the top performers all had a far more pronounced sense of purpose than their average counterparts.

The salespeople who sold with Noble Purpose—who truly wanted to make a difference to customers—consistently outsold the salespeople who were focused on sales goals and money.

It was a startling discovery that I might have missed, had it not been for a curbside conversation at the Phoenix airport.

I was finishing a two-day ride-along with a sales rep. As she dropped me off at the airport, I asked her a question I hadn't asked the other reps: "What do you think about when you go on sales calls? What's going on in your head?"

"I don't tell this to many people," she confessed, looking around the car as though someone was going to hear her secret. "When I go on sales calls, I always think about this particular patient who came up to me one day during a call on a doctor's office.

"I was standing in the hallway, talking to one of the doctors. I was wearing my company name badge, so I stood out. All of a sudden, this elderly woman taps me on the shoulder."

"Excuse me, Miss," she said. 'Are you from the company that makes this drug?' pointing to a pamphlet on the counter. "'Yes, ma'am," I replied.

"I just want to thank you,' she said. 'Before my doctor prescribed your drug, I barely had enough energy to leave the house. But now I can visit my grandkids; I can get down on the floor to play with them. I can travel. So thank you. You gave me back my life.'"

The sales rep told me, "I think about that woman every day. If it's 4:30 on a rainy Friday afternoon, other sales reps go home. I don't. I make the extra sales call because I know I'm not just pitching a product. I'm giving people their life back. That grandmother is my higher purpose."

Sitting in that blistering Phoenix heat, I realized she had said something incredibly important. I thought about that conversation during my entire flight back to Atlanta. I kept turning it over and over in my head. Our consulting team had spent months shadowing salespeople all over the country. We'd conducted in-depth interviews and analyzed every aspect of the sales calls. But this was the first time anyone had opened their heart and spoken in an authentic, emotional way about what truly moved them. While others had spoken in corporate platitudes, here was a salesperson speaking the language of the soul.

Was this what spelled the difference between average performers and top performers—this seemingly esoteric construct; this thing called *purpose*?

Keep in mind: this was 10 years ago. At that time, the conversation about meaning and purpose at work was the realm of ministers and non-profits. Yet here I was in a corporate setting, and I knew I had spotted something important. I went back to the transcripts of the interviews, looking for purpose. I didn't see it at first. Then I looked closer—and there it was, in the rep who said, "My dad was a doctor. Doctors have an even harder job than most people realize. I want to make it easier for them."

It was there in the rep who was thrilled to be discussing the science, and who practically glowed when he said, “Isn’t it amazing the way that we’re able to do these things?” There were other reps who spoke about the impact they had on nurses and patients. Although none of these people actually used the word purpose, the essence was there.

At the end of the project, the client asked us to look across all the reps and identify who we thought were the top performers. It was a double-blind study, so the other consultants and I didn’t know who was at the top and who was just average.

I had found five representatives who conveyed a sense of purpose in the interviews. I told the client, “I think these five are top-performing salespeople.”

Every single one was correct. And the rep in Phoenix who went on sales calls thinking about the grandmother? She was the number-one salesperson in the country for three years running.

Imagine the scene: a science-based firm with commercial endeavors around the globe. The leadership team is largely doctors, scientists, and MBAs. They’ve gathered around an impressive marble conference table to hear the results of the extensive sales study.

I have now just seemingly magically identified the top sales performers without knowing any of their sales numbers. Of course, the next question is pretty obvious. “How did you know?” they asked, looking at me as if I was some kind of wizard.

The answer I came up with left something to be desired. The best way I could describe it at the time was to say, “The top performers have a different story in their hearts.” It sounded fuzzy. It was fuzzy. I could tell it wasn’t resonating. I (painfully) elaborated, “It’s like they’re being guided by something more noble.” Still blank stares.

The senior leadership team was looking for something more concrete. I knew I was seeing something, something that went beyond the traditional business approach. It was deeper, and it was real. I remember thinking to myself, if we can bottle this, we can create magic.

That initial study revealed what larger research projects would later validate: The top performers weren’t driven solely by money. They were driven by purpose.

Ironic, isn’t it? The salespeople who cared about something more than just money wound up selling more than the salespeople who were focused only on quota.

Years of client work and several research studies later, the findings leave no doubt: a Noble Sales Purpose (NSP) is the difference between a sales force that is merely adequate and one that’s truly outstanding.

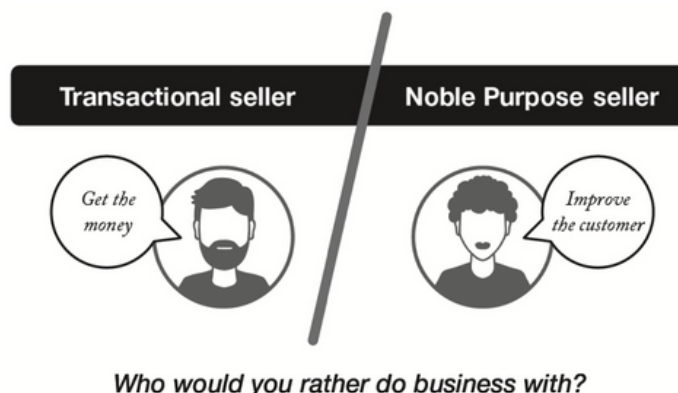
It took the better part of a decade to decode and bottle the magic I had observed in that first study. As it turns out, my initial assessment was actually accurate: **the top performers do carry a different story in their hearts.** What took a bit longer to figure out was how the story got there, what the story meant, and how to scale it across an organization.

And here's the most exciting part. While selling with Noble Purpose is innate to top performers, it is not limited to top performers. It can be activated in almost everyone. **Noble Purpose is a philosophy and strategy that can scale across even the largest of organizations.**

The result is a differentiated sales team who show up in a much more powerful way for customers. But it's even bigger than that. Noble Purpose drives exponential business results, and it also helps us become better human beings. It connects us and advances our relationships and our society in a way that we need now more than ever.

Imagine two salespeople. They're both waiting in the lobby to meet with a customer.

One salesperson has been told by his boss, "Your purpose is to close deals." The other salesperson believes her Noble Purpose is to improve the customer's business.



Which salesperson is going to ask better questions and uncover more customer intelligence: the seller focused on the deal, or the seller focused on the customer?

Which rep is going to be more innovative and engaging: the seller focused on the single transaction, or the seller focused on improving the client's business?

Now let's put you into this scenario. Imagine you're the customer. Which salesperson would you rather have calling on you: the one sitting in the lobby thinking about his deal? Or the one sitting in the lobby thinking about helping you?

The answer is obvious. **Customers would rather buy from a salesperson whose purpose is to help them than a salesperson who is only trying to close them.**

Salespeople whose Noble Purpose is to improve the customer outperform salespeople whose purpose is to close the customer.

Lest you have any doubts about the power of purpose, the research tells us:

Organizations with a purpose bigger than money outperform their competitors. A 10-year growth study of more than 50,000 brands around the world shows that companies who put improving people's lives at the center of all they do outperform the market by a huge margin.

The study, done by an independent consulting group in partnership with my colleague, former Procter & Gamble chief marketing officer (CMO) Jim Stengel, reveals that “Those who center their business on improving people’s lives have a growth rate triple that of their competitors, and they outperform the market by a huge margin.”

The economics of self-interest are not sustainable or even accurate. The traditional business model based on the assumption that the workforce is self-interested—motivated only by money, prestige, and promotion—has proven ineffective. In their book *The Economics of Higher Purpose*, distinguished scholars Robert E. Quinn and Anjan V. Thakor cite research about employees who are “positive energizers” who are not risk-averse or effort-averse, and who are motivated by intrinsic rewards. The authors, who have extensive expertise in economics, describe purpose as a valuable “off-balance-sheet resource” that can unleash these positive energizers.

Noble Purpose sales teams have a competitive advantage over quota-focused teams. In our work with over 200 firms, we tracked the behavioral differences between teams with a Noble Sales Purpose and those with a conventional economic mindset. Purpose-driven sellers consistently have a better understanding of customer issues, gather more robust customer intelligence, create more client-focused presentations and proposals, get to more senior levels within client companies, and are less likely to experience pushback on pricing.

Salespeople with a sense of purpose put forth more effort and are more adaptable than quota-focused reps. In her study “Understanding and Leveraging Intrinsic Motivation In Salespeople,” Dr. Valerie Good from Michigan State University asserted, “A sense of purpose—the belief one is making a contribution to a cause greater and more enduring than oneself—is an important contributor to sales success. Yet one that has rarely been studied.”

Dr. Good was inspired to conduct her research because of her father-in-law, who sold truck wheels. He’d been a top salesperson for decades, driven by his belief that the right wheels on an 18-wheeler saves people’s lives.

Good’s study revealed, “Intrinsic motivation—inherent enjoyment, satisfaction, and purpose—is more positively associated with increased salesperson effort and adaptability than a desire for money over time.” The internal drive to make a difference that she observed in her father-in-law proved to be the underpinning behind long-term sales success.

The data is clear, and it confirms what we already know in our hearts to be true: a Noble Purpose engages people’s passion in a way that spreadsheets don’t.

Interested in learning more about Selling with Noble Purpose?

Please contact Elizabeth Lotardo
Elizabeth@McLeodandMore.com
678-910-9818

McLeod
& More