

# FENESTRATION REVIEW ON

CANADA'S WINDOW AND DOOR MAGAZINE

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A portrait of Gordon Seier, a man with short, light brown hair and glasses, wearing a light blue polo shirt. He is smiling slightly and looking directly at the camera. The background is a blurred industrial setting, likely a window or door manufacturing plant, with various pieces of equipment and lights visible.

## THE PEOPLE'S MAN

Gordon Seier's journey  
in the window and door  
industry so far.

FANSHAWE'S TRAINING PROGRAM - FENCAN REGIONAL WEEK



# Hunting and gathering

by Rich Porayko

**T**he fall is hunting season. It's a time when a very small yet driven percentage of the population head out into the field in search of sustenance to feed their families. Non-hunters really have no idea how hard it is. You need to find the right age of the right sex of the right species at the right time in the right place.

The "Golden Hour" is the hour at sunrise or sunset. Many seasoned hunters only hunt during this productive period and spend the warm noon weather scouting new locations, setting up blinds, checking game cameras and taking a nap. In order to maximize the "Golden Hour" you need to get up really early. The more time and effort you spend in the field, the more payback you're going to get. After scouting for hours, days even, you finally see a huge buck. Excitement. You count the points. Only three on each side. Too small. Disappointment. Even when all of the planets for a shooting opportunity align, you still need to take the shot. If you choke, the animal can get spooked and bolt or, even worse, you miss or wound it.

A former mentor used to split sales reps into two categories: hunters and order-takers. I always thought the phrase "order-takers" was a bit harsh and prefer the term estimators but it's the same idea. One group is proactively reaching outwards seeking sales (technically, commissions). The other group reactively waits for RFQs and orders to come in. My mentor was right: there is a big difference between the two groups.

I thought hunting would be easy. I was wrong. I thought sales would be easy, too. I was wrong again. Being a professional salesperson is hard, often thankless work. It's full of rejection and disappointment.

Don't get me wrong. Estimators are key. There needs to be experienced and knowledgeable resources available to support the outside team. Estimators and inside sales assist the sales process but they do not drive sales. For an organization of any decent size, there really needs to be both. An outside sales representative cannot be sending quotes, entering orders, babysitting orders and visiting customers.

My mentor was right about the hunter/gatherer analogy. When there isn't a global pandemic,

successful sales reps need to be hustling out in the field. Cold calling new customers. Scouting new markets and opportunities. Qualifying prospects. Asking for orders. Some people have it naturally. Others can be trained. But most will fail or never pretend to try.

Sales is the ultimate numbers game. As with hunting, there is a direct parallel between productivity in the field and the return on investment. You're never going to harvest a deer sitting on your couch. Sales don't close themselves either.

Even after finding a prospect and being invited to bid on an active opportunity, you still need to close the sale. The customer may get spooked at the price and run. Or a competitor might swoop in and snipe the job from underneath you.

Which leads me to the well-known miserable feeling of disappointment going home empty handed. Nothing in life is guaranteed.

When quotes are turned into orders, quite often this is where the tedious and often unnecessary heavy lifting begins. Sales representatives are advocates for their customers with regards to lead times and quality issues, among other things. Although reps need to be aware of issues, customer support needs to be driven on the inside by inside sales, estimators or other customer support resources.

Sales representatives need to be hunting and gathering. Remove obstacles in the way of them doing their job. Take care of them and they will take care of you.

The market is already very competitive. Investing in your sales team and developing an aggressive commission structure so they can do more than just provide for their family is a surefire recruitment, retainment and growth strategy. If operations can keep up.

Another mentor used to say that if you aren't in sales, you're overhead. It is not an easy gig but if you set your sales team up for success, your company will follow.

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