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SALES SAVVY

Unblock the revenue flow

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Imagine a river of cash. At any time, you can dip in and retrieve money. But one day, the river stops flowing. Surely the money will begin running again. But as more time passes, the money still refuses to come.

Will you simply complain that your river is gone? Or will you walk upstream, through the forest, up the hill and around the bend to find out why the money has stopped flowing?

Sales works in much the same way. Sometimes, the pipeline flows freely, delivering a flood of cash. Then, without notice, the money slows to a trickle. Don't let a temporary blockage become a permanent sales stopper. Instead, try these strategies to re-establish the flow:

- Take it to another level. Has the person you've been calling on been told to slash their budget? If so, stop wasting your time and move elsewhere in the organization. Call on your original target's supervisor or a person in a different department. Explain how your product or service can improve the company's bottom line. If you cannot add value or save bottom-line dollars, don't waste their time.
- Think small. Are you too cool to sell small pieces of business? If that's your attitude, it's time for a change. Large businesses may be slashing their budgets, but many small businesses have nowhere to cut. Instead, these smaller companies are looking for ways to improve their existing operations. Over time, smaller clients will grow — which eventually could result in a long-term client with a hefty budget.
- Same customer, different sale. Imagine you run a \$15 million aerospace company. For years, you've focused on projects ranging from \$20,000 to \$50,000. Then, production in the industry comes to a standstill. What do you do? Recently, we recommended that this very company switch

focus. Rather than being stalled on delayed projects, the company began pitching for future projects. As a result, the company closed a \$40 million project with an existing customer.

- Prey on the weak. Some of your weakest competitors are likely preparing to go out of business. Don't wait to call on their customers. Position yourself to take over these customers when the time is right. Build relationships now so that you will be their customers' first call.

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