



# The Magnificent Game of Skill

It's a numbers game. Ever hear that one? A delivery truck driver or a car salesman, each could say the same thing. It's all

about the numbers. But in neither case would it be the truth.

Fact is, numbers are a part of every game. It's how we keep score. It's how we count the score and what we get credit for when we score, in most any game.

But in the profession of selling. It's so much more than just a numbers game. Most would have you think it's all about the numbers. See more and be more and make more. Remember, our goal is not just the common and ordinary, but thinking differently and uncommon execution.

If that were true then we could go out back with 10,000 balls and in a few days you'd be Tiger Woods or Barry Bonds. We both know how ridiculous it is to think that simply hitting more balls makes you a better hitter.

**While many would have us be judged on "results", we first have to look for evidence. Before radical results can occur, there must be a trend of evidence.**

And it's just as ridiculous to think that making more calls makes you a better selling professional. Whether it's 10,000 balls or 10,000 calls the real improvement is in the individual and their performance.

That's the *you* equation. Sure the numbers make up a big part of that equation, but not in the way most people think. The performance is not just in the numbers but in the how. In the approach you take to becoming better as a performer.

How did Barry Bonds become a world-class, Hall-of-Fame hitter?

Just by taking lots of batting practice, day after day? So did the rest of his teammates...and the rest of the league... and lots of players who didn't make it into the league. So that can't be the answer. In fact, Barry actually gets less chances to hit

in a game, but makes home runs and big hits out of a select number of pitches. It's what he does with the quality of pitches, not just the quantity. So that blows up the "just a numbers game" theory, right?

We hear players called "students of the game." And that gives us a big clue to becoming one of the best in any game. Thinking and studying with a purpose, and a focus on becoming better at your position. Improving in your position, and how you contribute to the team. In his book "Good to Great", Jim Collins calls it, "What you can do potentially better than anyone else."

How do you individually feel about your position? Good or great?

How do you feel about the kind of contribution you make to the team? Is it your best effort? Your best performance?

Are you a student of the game? A student of the opponents you'll face this week and how you can best win? Are you a competitor? Or are you just relying on numbers or experience to get you through the next at bat? How do your customers feel about your performance?

And then, there's the law of averages. The numbers game, part two.

The Law of Averages says that for any "average" calculated there must be both a low number or under-performance, and a higher number. Above the average, over and above typical or predictable achievement. Which one are you?

Chances are you're both. Every performer has highs and lows. Every home run hitter strikes out. Every winning QB throws touchdowns and incompletions and interceptions. But not every player can be counted on to come through with the big hit or the big TD in the clutch. What's your reputation? Is there a confidence, spoken or unspoken, throughout the team that when you step up... "Hey, it's Barry...we're gonna get this one."

Or does the team hang their head knowing that the "law of averages" is not in their favor if winning rests on your shoulders? If it's the end of the month, and we need someone to come through, is it going to be you?

The magnificent games of skill need

top performers. Whether it's golf, or baseball, or selling. The skills, study, and commitment to becoming one of the best and becoming known as a top performer. Someone (maybe you) the team counts on, and has confidence in, to deliver.

Let this be an encouragement to each of you. To keep going. And a congratulations to many of you. For raising the bar on your expectations. For raising the level of your commitment. For raising the level of your performance and your production. And for raising your status in the eyes of your managers and your teammates and your customers.

Big is available. Not everyone can be Tiger Woods or Barry Bonds. But anyone can become a student of the game and raise your personal level of performance.

It's not just a "numbers game" but there are numbers that get us excited. Trends, indicators, movement, improvement, percentages...they all tell a story. The excitement of a story builds, when the numbers show momentum, an "above average" performance against the industry and against the competition and yes, even against ourselves.

While many would have us be judged on results, we first have to look for evidence. Before radical results can occur, there must be a trend of evidence.

That good things are happening, that performances are improving, that individuals are responding, and the numbers are changing...for the better.

Ask the question to each individual on your team, "How's the becoming going?" As we head into a brand new year...Take some time to review what you are doing, and how you're doing it. Ask yourself, "What have I learned and how am I applying it?" Schedule some time with your manager(s) to talk about what you could be doing to improve your performance, and your reputation as a performer. The marketplace will notice and pay you well for it. OK... you're up!

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