

## SO...YOU'RE IN A SLUMP?



There's no doubt that one of the greatest challenges working sales professionals face is consistency. The good news is that inconsistency only happens for two reasons. External factors and internal factors.

External factors are those we can't usually control. The market at large, unforeseen illness or decisions made at government, corporate or brand levels that, whilst we need to deal with them, aren't our doing or fault. So, what to do? Start with that old serenity prayer; "God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; the courage to change the things I can and the wisdom to know the difference". Therein lies your best piece of advice and you don't need to be religious to heed it. Here's some more;

- Do NOT be distracted by what you see others doing or how you see others coping unless they are defying it. Anything less needs to be ignored.
- Stay away from negativity. **That's what causes things you can't control.** Do not buy what the negative people are selling. Most just don't want to be left alone on the bottom. They want you with them. They'll say things like, "be realistic", or "this used to be a great industry..." The truth is; they have changed more than the industry has. Lastly for now....
- It's easy to excel when conditions are ideal. You only get noticed if you don't. But to excel **against** trends - that's what gets you noticed for the best. Medals aren't handed out at boot camp. You need to be exposed to danger or failure to be commended. How you approach adversity can set you up for promotion, either by title or status. The reason; if you fail, the reason won't be seen as an excuse.

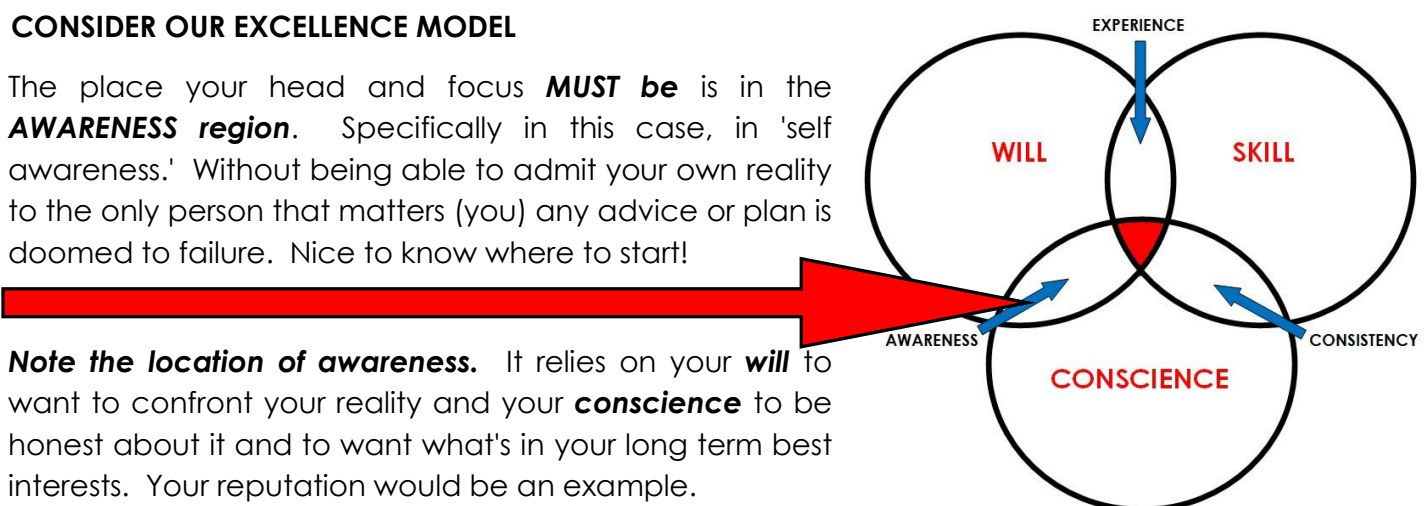
Let's take a look at Internal factors. They just might be our fault but the good news is they are more fixable than the external threats. They too fall into two categories; **attitude** or **aptitude**.

Now, the overriding factor to handle the slump, regardless of what causes the slump; is attitude. Let's say for instance that the market is bad. Leads are down, the morale in your team is down, you're wondering where your next sale is coming from and the boss is on the warpath. The pressure you feel will only distract you and give your customers the impression that you're under the pump. Your opportunity stories will come across as desperate. You'll default to a focus on outcome instead of process. You'll start to second guess yourself, then doubt yourself and eventually try to be something you're not. In short, you'll only make it worse.

### CONSIDER OUR EXCELLENCE MODEL

The place your head and focus **MUST be** is in the **AWARENESS region**. Specifically in this case, in 'self awareness.' Without being able to admit your own reality to the only person that matters (you) any advice or plan is doomed to failure. Nice to know where to start!

**Note the location of awareness.** It relies on your **will** to want to confront your reality and your **conscience** to be honest about it and to want what's in your long term best interests. Your reputation would be an example.

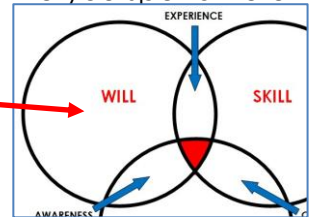


In the absence of self awareness, you can only blame external factors because the absence of awareness is ignorance. The boss is now an ass, the brand hasn't changed in too long, the advertising is a joke buyers are liars will shop you for 5 cents. Even if it's true, you'll only amplify it beyond what it really is. This only increases its impact.

Let's tie up the two internal factors into the **FOUR STAGES OF COMPETENCE** and note the role that situational awareness plays. See if you can pinpoint where you're at?

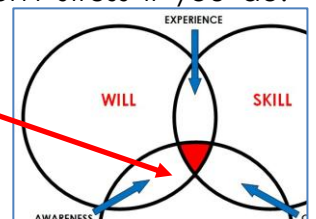
## 1. Unconscious incompetence

**You don't understand or know how to do something and don't recognise it.** You may deny the usefulness of the skill. You must recognise your own incompetence and the value to you of the new skill, before moving on to the next stage. The length of time you spend here depends on your **will** to confront the truth and to learn.



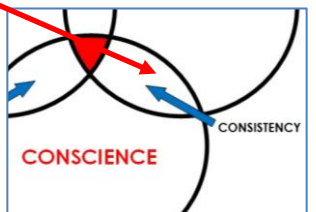
## 2. Conscious incompetence

You don't understand or know how to do something but you've admitted it and you know it. You also know the value of changing or learning to address the deficit. The making of mistakes can be integral to the learning process at this stage so don't stress if you do. Moving on from here relies on your new **awareness**.



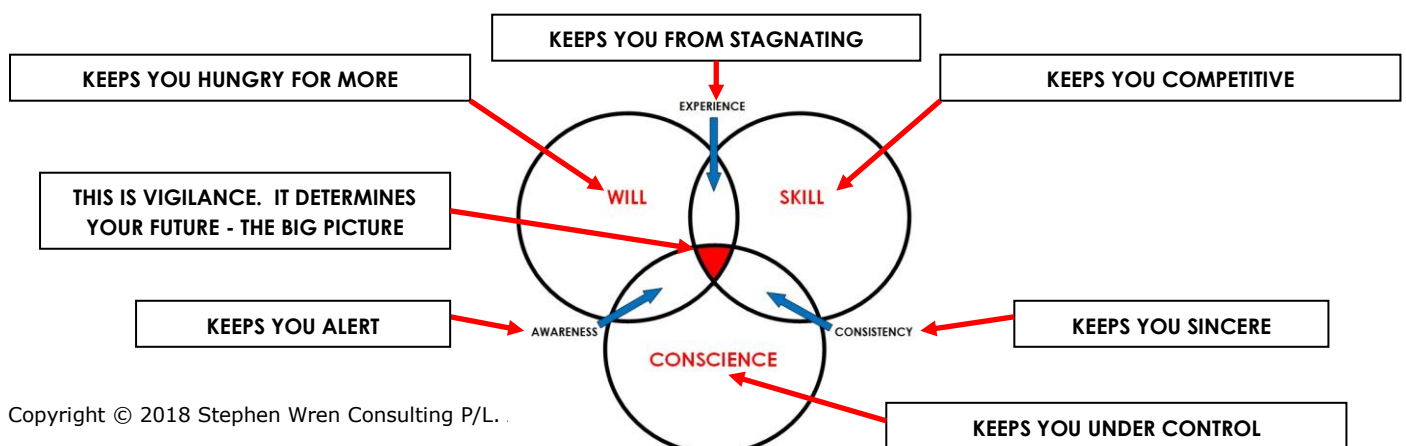
## 3. Conscious competence

You now know how to do something and why it works. However, demonstrating the newfound skill or knowhow requires concentration. It may be broken down into steps. There is heavy conscious involvement in actually doing it. **Consistency** is now the key. Some call it practice.



## 4. Unconscious competence

You've had so much practice with a skill that it has become instinctive. As a result, there is no lag time between cause and effect. You can also multitask. You may even be able to teach it to others. Now the excellence model comes into its own. Each circle in harmony with the others. None dominating - all supporting.



## IN CONCLUSION

Handling the internal issues may be simpler than you thought. Here's your plan

1. Determine which stage of competency you are at.
2. Then determine whether the three circles are in harmony. You might have strong skill but the will is weak. Lost your passion? That'll do it. Nothing like failure to kill that. How about your conscience. Nothing like being desperate to test it. Maybe you don't like what you're becoming. Fear not - if this touches a nerve, that's your wake up call. Now your awareness has kicked in. That's good. Your will gets a boost and that means the courage to admit your reality and cause change.
3. It is vital that you set goals. Make them doable but not too easy. Consult to your workmates, family and boss about what they should be.

### The Rules for Goal Setting

1. Write them down
2. Put a date on them
3. Determine who or what you might need to help you work towards them
4. List the hurdles you'll encounter on the way
5. List the people who'll benefit when you achieve them
6. List what's in it for you. Very important!
7. Determine the first step you need to take
8. Take the first step.

I positively guarantee you that if you don't take the first step, you will not, never, ever take the second.

**DO NOT** become a wandering generality.



**DO** become a meaningful specific!



**The rule is simple - you do it now**

Steve Wren