

**KATHY KOULTOURIDES**

**LUCIFER  
LEADERS**

**THE HIDDEN COST OF DEVIANT  
BEHAVIOR IN THE SALES FORCE**



# THE FOLLOWING EXCERPT HAS BEEN TAKEN FROM

*Lucifer Leaders: The Hidden Cost of Deviant Behavior in the Sales Force*

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Published by Silver Tree Publishing, a division of Silver Tree Communications, LLC (Kenosha, WI). [www.SilverTreeCommunications.com](http://www.SilverTreeCommunications.com)

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Editing by:  
Barb Wang

Cover design and typesetting by:  
Courtney Hudson

First edition, October 2018

ISBN: 978-1-948238-08-3

Created in the United States of America

## Chapter 1 – The Backdrop

I spent 20 of my 34-year sales career in corporate training positions. I played the roles of sales training facilitator, designer and developer of sales training, manager, director, and executive of the sales training function. Throughout that time, it was the facilitation role that gave me true insight into what makes sales people tick. Over the years, I became highly sensitized to the behavior of sales professionals as a predictor of performance outcomes. My team and I got so good at seeing the future, for better or for worse, that we bested the top predictive indicator tools of the day. By the time I left my role as master sales training facilitator we had an .875 batting average on who would be terminated within the next three months, and who should be terminated immediately.

How did we become so accurate in our predictions? It was because we spent a lot of time with the new hires. I mean a *lot* of time. We spent way more time with them than their own sales manager. Within the span of one week, we had more predictive intel than the average sales manager had spending the first three months with them. How can that be, you wonder? It stands to reason; they were a captive audience. We were present with them for breakfast, lunch, dinner, and then some, for days and sometimes weeks straight.

One of the reasons why the sales manager can't spend the time needed with the new hire stems from the assimilation process. A lot of companies have awkward onboarding and training practices that prevents them from getting a good look at who they've hired before it's too late. In some cases, the new hire is working remotely and unsupervised from the get-go. Some companies hire in cohorts and send them immediately to an immersion training session that can last anywhere from a few days to several weeks, thwarting any opportunity to "check under the hood" before making the commitment to spend the money on travel for training. Some companies provide initial onboarding at the local level to ready them for their job, spending anywhere from 30, 60, to 90 days, and then send the new hire to "sales training" to polish their skills around the company's methods, product knowledge, sales tools and processes. I'm a proponent of this practice because it gives the hiring manager time to assess and assimilate the new hire. Unfortunately, the manager doesn't always spend the amount of time needed in the crucial period just after hire. They often forego a proper onboarding and evaluation period and let the new hire walk aimlessly through their first crucial weeks on the job, overlooking behaviors that could provide clues to potential counterproductive workplace behavior.

Over the years, I acquired experience with specific behaviors that, in hindsight, provided telltale signs of an unfit hire. On the surface, they are everything that sales management and human resources are hoping for. Driven and results oriented, they can turn a perfect stranger into a

“Best Friend Forever” in a matter of one conversation. They are hunters and they are closers. They score low on the conscientious and agreeability scale and high on the extroversion scale. Not only do they bend the rules, they break them. They are all of this, and over the top.

This book shines a light on that certain type of salesperson that I call The Lucifer Leader who has the capability of derailing an organization by inciting other salespeople on the team to engage in illicit activity. They do so to acquire power and position amongst their peers. As you learn about these “leaders,” you will recognize many personality traits and behavior disorders that have crossed your career path over time. Throughout the book, I use real workplace stories to build a case for the elements that can identify this threat so that it can be eliminated from the organization, or never hired in the first place.

## **Many Lucifers, Many Lessons**

You will meet Charismatic Lucifer, who is the poster child for the Lucifer Leader. As you read the story you will be shocked at the total cost of his influence. You will learn about Swindler Lucifer who is a con artist in disguise and a reminder to manage your hiring process effectively. You will meet Criminal Lucifer who can potentially ruin your brand causing a disastrous public relations nightmare and learn what you can do to eliminate this risk. There is a chapter on The Libertine Lucifer and how their attention-seeking behavior can rob you blind. You will learn about Monte Christo Lucifer and how their wily ways can tank several sales teams at one time. You will learn about Voyeur Lucifer, a story beholden by competitiveness and the ultimate nightmare in the era of the #MeToo movement. You will meet Imperious Lucifer and see how the assumption of power and arrogance can cost you way more than you bargained for. Finally, you will meet Wardrobing Lucifer, whose behavior, on the surface, seems innocuous, but in reality, is a crystal ball into future behavior and performance.

This book was written for sales managers and senior leaders, human resources professionals, sales trainers, business owners, and anyone touching the sales new hire in the recruiting, hiring, onboarding and training process.

If you are a sales manager, senior leader, or business owner you will learn the true costs associated with a bad hire, one that can derail your entire team, your business, and potentially your career. You will also learn what to look out for and the questions you need to ask to gain a deeper understanding about the product you are about to hire.

If you are a human resource professional, you will gain insight into the procedures that you can implement to mitigate the enormous costs that plague the sales force when a Lucifer Leader walks among you. You will also learn some strategies to help you assist your constituents in the recruiting and hiring process.

If you are a sales trainer, you will learn to recognize the behaviors, the talk and the attitudes that Lucifer Leaders have up their sleeve. With your keen eye you can help your sales managers diminish the blow they will feel at the hand of the Lucifer Leader.

While I'm not an academic, or a seasoned researcher that filled the pages of this book with graphs and charts of correlations to standard deviations, I do have over 20 years of practical field experience. I've trained over 4,000 sales reps in my day. I've seen it all. The good, the bad and the ugly, and I have a way of bringing out lessons learned through good story telling.

**Why did you buy this book?** It's simple. In today's mega social media broadcast society of bad behavior, this book will help keep you out of the headlines. So, grab a cup of coffee and read through the stories. I guarantee you will learn something that you did not know, and enjoy a chuckle or two along the way.

## Chapter 2 — Charismatic Lucifer

They were all fired. All but one. Eleven sales people in total. In one fell swoop, they were gone. By my best estimation, we just lost nearly \$1,000,000 in sales force investment. This never happens, nor should it ever happen, until now. Sales Academy #24.

This was my first introduction to the Lucifer Leader. I had not recognized this type of leader behavior prior to the events that took place during this particular two-week training session. I call this leader Charismatic Lucifer, not in the positive inspirational sense, but in the compelling attraction that can influence the darker side of motivation, sense. He is a convincing figure who uses his charm to manipulate the emotional reactions of others. He can bend the most sensible rationale into a perverted action. This is the story of Charisma Lucifer (and the haunted conference center).

I was told that the Sugar Point conference center was haunted. No surprise considering that the first building erected on the site was built in the late 1800's. Per the conference center brochure, Victorcliff as it is named, is a Victorian Mansion restored to its original magic and updated with modern amenities to provide meeting space and banquet-style dining for business meetings, conferences and training.

The property is very beautiful. Settled on thirty-two acres of rolling tree lined hills, sweeping lawns, and stunning panoramic views of the valley. It was named Sugar Point by the settlers who saw the land formation in the winter as a snow-capped mound of sugar. It looked like it would be a perfect location for our two-week sales training academy. The sales training academy is used to train new hires, with whom I refer to as "BISCUITS" who have already completed their 4-week onboarding program and have been in the field actively selling for 2-3 months. "BISCUITS" is a mnemonic that my training team made up; it stands for **B**usiness **I**nternal **S**upport **C**enter **U**nited in **T**raining **S**ales. Somewhere along the way one of my training team members coined the phrase "Biscuits Training" as an internal reference for our sessions. We did not publicly call it that, it was our internal moniker. Eventually the term BISCUIT became an endearing reference to the sales trainees. They came to us as raw dough; pliable, and ready to rise. After we baked them for a week or so in our sales training program they came out as fresh biscuits ready to entice any and all prospects into taking a bite.

I signed the contract to host my next sales training academy and began the yeoman's work of a training facilitator. There were participant rosters to assemble, session memos to be sent to participants, subject matter expert facilitators to be confirmed, and materials to be gathered,

sorted, boxed and transported. Sounds simple, but there are a lot of details, including diva attendees who need special *everything*.

I was looking forward to this particular session because I really liked the facility. The food was outstanding, the meeting rooms were nice and big with comfortable ergonomic chairs, and large windows providing natural light. The entire conference center was self-contained with running trails, fitness trails, swimming, tennis, game rooms, BBQ and fitness center rec center, tavern and dining, perfect! I wouldn't need to worry about transportation for off-site meals and entertainment during the entire two-week event.

Because my house was 43 miles away I decided to stay at the conference center for the duration of the Academy. So, on Sunday I packed up my car and headed down to Sugar Point to get everything set up for our Monday morning start. Upon arrival, I left the bulk of the materials in my car, grabbed my suitcase and checked in at the lodging center. I was handed the key for sleeping room #113. Like most conference centers, you need a trail of breadcrumbs to find your way back from wherever you came. After winding through several corridors, over an enclosed foot bridge, and down an elevator (yeah, I said down, totally confusing). I arrived at room #113.

I entered the room with a sigh of "meh." It seemed a little industrial. Cinder-block walls painted a color somewhere between pink, mauve and beige. It had two queen beds and between the two beds was a night stand. Directly over the night stand was a coffee pot built into the cinderblock wall. Seemed a bit odd, but what the hell.

I threw my bag on to one of the beds and started to unpack. I hung up my clothes first, then headed into the bathroom to put away my toiletries. There really wasn't any room to put anything in the bathroom. It was super small. It had a ceramic free-standing sink with no countertop or cabinetry. There was a mirror over the sink, I'm guessing approximately seventeen inches or so. There was a commode, and a shower with the same thematic color on the ceramic tiles as was on the cinderblock walls. There was one small metal shelf above the sink. It was maybe six inches deep and maybe eighteen inches wide. Not much room for anything.

The only thing that really fit on the little metal shelf in the bathroom was the soap, and the mini bottles of lotion, mouthwash and shampoo that the conference center provided each guest in a cute little basket. I took the first item out of the basket and set it on the metal shelf. No sooner was I able to grab the second item when the first item leapt up off the shelf and slammed hard on the floor. It was almost as if someone picked up the container and threw it to the ground with physical force. I didn't think too much about it. I picked up the container and placed it back on the shelf, and again, the container mysteriously leapt from the shelf and was driven into the

epoxy coated concrete flooring. Now that got my attention. It was at this point where I remembered the conference center sales person joking with me that the place was haunted.

Being the somewhat superstitious person that I am, I picked up the container and looked around the room and said, "I apologize for intruding on your space, but I can't leave. I am going to be here for two weeks. I'm a really nice person and I'm willing to respect your space if you can do the same for me. Perhaps we will both learn to get along with each other." I then sat the container on the shelf and it never moved again.

I realize that this sounds like a tall tale, but believe me, it is absolutely true. I saw the container slam to the floor, twice. There was no wind, no fan or air conditioner kicking on. There is no other way to explain it other than some strange supernatural poltergeist. I went about my business, tidying up before heading back to the car to get the classroom set up.

Meals at the conference center were held in the general dining room. Each company attending had tables with their company name on a metal stand in the middle of the table. It was about seven o'clock by the time I got to the dining room. By then, there were a few BISCUITS who had already checked-in and were having their dinner. I made my way to their table and introduced myself, broke bread with them and learned a little bit about them. There was Bethany, a new seller from the Wisconsin. She was very social and had good relating skills. She was polite and engaging. Seated next to her was Paul, a seller from Minnesota. Although Bethany and Paul did not know one another prior to this, they got to know one another quickly since both came from the Upper Midwest. Next to Paul was Kevin who was quiet and seemed a bit shy. He was from an office that changed sales managers within the last three months since he was hired. Kevin sold printers before joining the company. After dinner, I walked them over to the meeting room to show them where it was and to make them feel more comfortable and acquainted with the space. Everyone was nice and polite and seemed like a good group. I said goodnight and returned to my room to retire for the evening.

No sooner did I fall asleep when the coffeemaker in the wall space turned on. It woke me up. As a facilitator of a lengthy program, the last thing you need is a lack of sleep due to midnight interruptions. I hear this thing and I think, what the hell? Is that the coffee maker? I turn on the light and sure enough the coffee pot has kicked on and making weird gurgling noises. The little brew light was glowing steady orange. I reached over and turned it off. This was not a coffee maker with a timer. It had one on/off switch. I definitely did not turn it on, I was sleeping. So, how did it turn on? Was it an electrical glitch? Perhaps it was my invisible roommate, unable to resist temptation to convince me that the hotel was indeed haunted. One thing is for sure, it wasn't my mind playing tricks on me. The coffee pot turned on, by itself, in the middle of the night.



When my alarm went off in the morning, I had nearly forgotten about the coffeemaker until I caught a glimpse of it out of the corner of my eye. I shook my head and got ready for work.

The session kicked-off and the introductions were made. We went around the room and each rep introduced themselves with our traditional ice breaker; name, location, previous experience, and objective for the session. First up was Kimberly, a very attractive girl, mid-to-late 20's. She came from the copier sales industry. Very confident and competitive. Her objective for the class was to learn everything she could in order to return to her branch office and position herself at the top of the sales rankings. Next came Brad, a jovial, rotund, fun-loving individual whose objective was to learn best practices from the other sales people in attendance. Third in line was Rob. Rob presented himself as smart and clever. He was dressed well, carried himself with swagger and had a silver tongue. His objective was to supplement his existing selling skills and learn some new techniques. On to David, he was a southern gentleman. He was a little older than the first three, maybe by ten years or so. He was very polite and well spoken, and wanted to learn more product knowledge. We continued around the room, introducing those I met at dinner the night before, along with the rest of the fated twelve. Everything seemed to be going along perfectly. Day one was a success. Day two was a success. Day three was a success. Everything was going according to schedule. The visiting dignitaries from the corporate office were on time, and communicated upbeat messaging. The subject matter expert topic presenters were engaging and brought product demos. The smile sheets reflected an appreciative and engaged group of participants. It was a fun, but a long week. By Friday we were half way through the two-week Academy. We had a full day on the schedule for Saturday with Sunday off for reflection and refueling before beginning week two.

I had been running this sales training academy for over three years. We held a two-week session every eight weeks or so. This cohort was session number twenty-four. All the reviews by the participants past and present were stellar. We had a high percentage of successful outcomes from previous attendees. I had no reason to believe that this class would be any different. Until Saturday came around.

I slept well on Friday night, in fact I'll call it one of the best nights' sleep of my facilitating career. I woke up refreshed and very upbeat. Perhaps I slept so well because of the exhausting efforts required to be a facilitator, event manager, guest speaker coordinator and just plain old being "on" all day every day for the past five days. Finally, Saturday has arrived. Once I finish today's session, I will go home to spend Saturday night and part of Sunday at home before returning for week two.

With briefcase in tow, I head toward the meeting room. As I approach the enclosed foot bridge one of the attendees stopped me with a very disturbing look on his face. I said, "Good morning"

and he replied, "I don't think so, and I have never been so embarrassed to be part of a company."

Whoa. "What happened? What are you talking about?" I said.

"I don't even want to discuss it, it makes me sick, I am disgusted." He replied, and went on, "If you want to know, I suggest you speak with hotel security."

This is not what a facilitator wants to hear first thing in the morning. So, I haul myself down to the security office. When I walk in, I see the same dreaded look on the face of the head of security for the conference center. "I just ran into one of my attendees in the hallway and he was very upset about something that happened. He wouldn't tell me what it was, in fact he said he couldn't even talk about it because it was so upsetting to him. Did something happen?" I said to the Director.

"Come into my office and have a seat." He says. Then he picks up the phone and calls the Director of Sales for the Conference Center into his office. This is the person with whom I signed the event contract. "There was a serious incident that happened last night and it involved several of your attendees," said the security director. "What in the world happened?" I asked. "Here's what we know," he responded. "In the early morning hours, around three a.m., a large group of your attendees returned to the property from an outing. They were intoxicated and were very loud. They began roaming the halls of the lodging facility. One person took a fire extinguisher from the wall and started spraying it under guest room doors. They also discharged the extinguisher into the ice machine. They were banging on guest room doors, waking up guests and causing a lot of disturbance," he said. The sales director chimed in, "We had several calls come in to the front desk. And, worse, our best recurring customer told us that they will no longer do business with us. They book one three-day retreat every month for thirty people. That will be a huge revenue hit to the property."

This is very disturbing. I am in complete disbelief. My people? I've been with them for five straight days, I can't believe they would do this! "Are you sure it was my people?" I ask. "Yes, we have them on video surveillance. I'm surprised that you didn't hear anything. This happened on the same floor that you are on." My heart is in my throat. I feel my face go flush. I ask, "What is your next step?" The security director responded, "We will complete a full investigation, and determine our course of action when the investigation concludes."

I am naturally mortified. I apologize up and down and let both Directors know that I am taking this very seriously and will involve our corporate management team today. This is bad, very bad. I am embarrassed for my company, its reputation, and that something like this could happen on my watch. I head on down to the meeting room and begin setting up.

As the clock gets closer to eight a.m., the attendees begin trickling in. The room is set up in a U-shape configuration with the attendees in the U and my seat is at a table at the front, facing them. I continue to organize my materials. The room is silent. There isn't the usual chit-chat that happens before the beginning of class.

When everyone is seated, I finish organizing my flip charts and sit down at my seat in the front. I survey the room in silence making purposeful eye contact with each participant in the U. I open with "Who wants to tell me what happened last night?" Dead silence. Not one person speaks up. I sit quietly for a couple of minutes, continuing to scan the group eyeball to eyeball. I ask again. And again, I hear crickets. "We are not going to start until I hear what happened, even if it takes all day."

It's hard to believe that 16 people would sit in silence. Even the guy with whom I spoke in the hallway, on my way to the session, the one who was disgusted, didn't speak up.

I continue to sit in silence, looking at each of their faces. Their puffy faces. Their red eyes. All evidence of too much alcohol and not enough sleep. I begin asking pointed closed-ended questions to specific people. Slowly they start talking, but most of what they are feeding me are lies. "So-and-so broke his toe while we were at the dance club and we had to help him back to his room and we accidentally ran into a couple of hotel room doors." Blah, blah, blah.

Finally, about 30 minutes into this, I see a police car driving slowly up the long winding drive. I can see the car as the windows are facing me. Perfect. "Well, the police are finally here, I'm sure that they will be reviewing the surveillance video." We will get down to the bottom of this shortly," I say.

Simultaneously, like kittens following a feather on a string, they turn around to look out the window. Their heads snap back to forward position so fast you'd think that I fired a gun in the air. Suddenly, the confessions started pouring out. A majority went to a bar. They got really drunk. They were kicked out of the bar. They had to find their way back to the conference center. Someone broke a toe, someone threw-up, someone grabbed the fire extinguisher, and then another, and then another, each person trying to outdo the other with a better stupid stunt. I took a lot of notes.

In fact, I could not write nearly as fast as they were dishing on one another. After they got everything out on the table, I told them to wait in the classroom while I met with security. I walked down to the security office and had a conversation with the Director. It turned out that the police car was just a coincidence. The cops weren't there to investigate the incident.

The hotel was willing to give me some time to speak with my higher-ups. So, I headed back down to the classroom. I was half shocked that they were all still in the room sitting in their seats.

“This is a very serious situation and a very bad reflection on our company” I said. “As the manager of this Academy I am required to file a serious incident report with our legal team and inform our senior leaders. I am shutting this session down effective immediately and advise each of you to remain in your rooms until Monday morning when you will learn the consequences of your actions.”

They were all scared, and they all felt bad, physically and emotionally. I left the facility, giving my personal contact information to the front desk and security with instructions to call me immediately if they heard one peep out of them. My next call was to my boss, and to our General Council. Those were tough calls. It was on my watch; I am the leader. How could I let this happen? Was it my fault? How in the world did I sleep through all of the racket? I’m a light sleeper, I would, and should have woke up. To this day I wonder if it was the poltergeist, ensuring that I heard nothing. Allowing the melee to ensue, enjoying the action as if it were the instigator, and finding peace in the burden that I must now carry forward.

By the end of Saturday, I spoke with both my boss and our General Council. We decided to send everyone home on Monday, which meant that I would need to facilitate the discharge. I had to involve our corporate travel department to change everyone’s flight, contact the attendees’ managers and let everyone know the steps in the investigation from the company’s end. On top of that I had to assuage the hotel and apologize up and down, promising that we would fulfill our contractual obligation even though we were leaving a week early. And, that I would apologize in person with their number one client.

In the end, we fired all but one of the twelve participants. We paid for the fulfillment of our contract as if we ate, slept and continued our training for the balance of the following week, and I was able to get the conference center’s number one customer to accept our apology and not hold it against the hotel. They continued to book their monthly event without incident, and allowing the hotel to continue to capture the revenue they forecasted from their number one client.

If I were reading this story, I’d be dying to know the results from the company’s internal investigation, which by the way cost the company \$36,000.00 (this is the cost for just the internal investigation). I will share it with you. Let’s start with Rob. The team looked up to him, he was polished and self-confident with a quick wit and silver tongue. The group was attracted to his lone wolf style; running his book of business his way, not necessarily by the book, or by the principles set up by the organization. Throughout the week, he often opined of his sales

conquests citing examples of his techniques, which weren't exactly conventional, or by the prescription taught in the sales training. His renegade attitude captured the enchantment of the others.

He convinced everyone that they deserve a night out on the town because of the hard work they put into the workshop this past week. He cozied up to Kimberly during the week and added that "dancing" should be part of the celebration. Rob directed Brad, the jovial one, to secure transportation for the group. They picked a popular club where all the best-in-class singles go to party. Rob led the group through the red velvet ropes that formed a pathway directly to the bouncer. It was \$15 per person to get in the door. Rob used his skills to secure a volume discount for the group of 11. They pooled their money together and entered the first lobby bar. It was dark with strobe lights gyrating to the beat of the music from the disc jockey's turntables. The group scattered about the club eventually finding themselves on the dance floor. Eventually they took a break from the sardine can and headed to their appointed booth. That was when Rob inspired the group to do shots. The first round was Sex-On-The-Beach and it was so good that they had to have another round, and a third, before half of them headed back to the dance floor. This gave Rob a chance to manage Kevin. Kevin was the introvert. This type of club is way over his head, so Rob took it upon himself to lead Kevin to a new life of excitement. He baited him to connect with a girl who was seated at a table by herself, tapping on her phone. He even generated some opening lines that might work well for Kevin. They settled on a ploy whereby Kevin would greet the girl with a request for help with his non-functioning phone, which happened to be the same kind. Kevin got up his nerve and within 30 seconds he took a seat with Miss Lonesome.

On their next break, Rob ordered a bottle of champagne for Kimberly. All of the pretty girls in the club had a bottle of champagne at their table. The bubbly glasses perched in their hands like expensive accoutrements. They sipped and giggled as the effervescence framed their faces with sparkles. Kimberly felt like a queen, a complete part of the experience. They don't have these types of clubs in the small Midwest city where she is from.

The dance floor was crowded, in fact, packed. It looked like one giant mass of humanity bobbing and weaving to the rhythm of the colored strobes. Rob grabbed Kimberly by the hand and they weaved and bobbed their way to the middle of the dance floor. They danced close, Rob holding Kimberly up on her high heels so that she wouldn't get swallowed up by the crowd. They got closer and closer and made their way off the dance floor stuck together like glue.

Kimberly slid into the booth, grabbing the bottle of champagne and taking a swig straight from the bottle. By the time the bottle was turned upside down in the side bar, Kimberly was face down in Rob's lap.

Brad came back off the dance floor and slid into the booth. He took one look at Kimberly and asked Rob if she was passed-out. Rob was in a trance. Brad downed the rest of his beer and headed back out to the dance floor. By this time, one of the bouncers realized what was going on in the booth and hustled Rob and Kimberly promptly out of the club. As they were being forcibly escorted, Kevin took notice. He bolted from Miss Lonesome and followed in hot pursuit not knowing if Rob and Kimberly were ditching them or if something else was happening. Kevin shouted his name several times, but Rob would not turn around. Once they cleared the doors, Kevin caught up with both of them outside. Kimberly didn't look too good. She was disheveled and needed physical assistance to stand upright. Rob looked at Kevin and told him that they kicked Kimberly out of the club because she was overserved and that Rob came along to make sure that she would get back to the hotel safely.

Kevin asked Rob about the others; should he go back into the club and round everyone up so that they can leave together? Rob told Kevin to go back inside and have fun and the rest of the group could get a couple of taxis back to the conference center. Kevin was unsure of this course of action, but Rob looked like he had everything under control, so he turned around and went back inside to let the others know what was going on.

It was getting late, or should I say, early in the morning. So, while Rob and Kimberly started to make their way back, Kevin rounded up the rest of the group and together they fumbled for transportation, trying to remember the name of the facility they needed to return to. Somehow, by the Grace of God, they got back to the hotel, but not without incident. One of the cab drivers insisted that they did not pay their fare in full and threatened to call the cops if they didn't pay up. To avoid trouble, they worked out a deal where two of the guys would stay behind with the driver while the others went in to secure the funds. They had to find Rob, but could not remember which room he was in. They started pounding on doors randomly, laughing and carrying on like a bunch of drunken frat boys. As they turned the corner toward the next wing, they ran smack into Rob and Kimberly who were just now stumbling their way back.

Rob gave them some money and they asked Kimberly if they could go into her purse and get the rest of what they needed, with a promise to pay her back. Kimberly mumbled something incoherently, which gave the boys the nod they needed to rifle through her purse.

With the taxi incident behind them, the group raucously stumbled back to the sleeping quarters of the conference center. As they approached the floor they took notice of Kimberly crumpled up in a heap next to the ice machine. And this, they thought was funny. Rob suggested she looked like something from A Weekend at Bernie's. That was all the impetus that Brad needed to grab the fire extinguisher off the wall and position it with Kimberly to give her the

appearance of riding a mechanical bull with the hose as her rein. The extinguisher was heavy and as Brad repositioned it, it discharged. Brad recoiled and landed ass over end crashing into a guestroom door directly across from the ice machine. Everyone roared. William could not resist grabbing the fire extinguisher and discharging it right where the sun doesn't shine on Brad's backside. And so, the melee begins.

The group whipped themselves into a frenzy, spray-painting the walls with the fire extinguisher, and discharging it under the guest room doors. As guests started phoning the front desk, Brad dropped the extinguisher on his foot, which injured his toe to the point where it was bleeding. He pulled off his shoe and stuck his foot in the ice machine. William grabbed the fire extinguisher and with grand proclamation, announced that he would put out the fire and promptly emptied the extinguisher into the ice machine on top of Brad's bleeding foot. With nothing left in the extinguisher the group disbanded and retired to their respective rooms leaving their Lucifer signature behind.

Let's break this story down; who was the Lucifer Leader? If you guessed Rob, you guessed right. The lone wolf. The swagger, the silver tongue. There was something about him that was of interest. An air of mystery fueled by his unorthodox tactics. It was his "don't play by the rules" approach that is most revealing. Cavalier screams lack of respect, and when you have lack of respect for process and the order of the organization, trouble usually follows. But more importantly, he was the type of rep that sales managers and HR managers love. Self-confident, competitive, works hard, plays harder and plays to win.

Sales people tend to be competitive. It's a characteristic that many hiring managers seek. In fact, it should be noted that this company's selection tool measured competitiveness as a key trait for employment consideration. Our Lucifer scored off-the-chart on the competitive scale.

Interestingly, some researchers question the pursuit of highly competitive salespeople. Kohn (1992) argues that competitiveness can drive employees to sabotage the efforts of people they should be helping because highly competitive individuals are, by their nature, more likely to view others as competitive threats.<sup>1</sup>

In their research on the effect of trait competitiveness on salesperson deviance, Ronald Jelinek and Michael Ahearne explain how organizational fit discourages deviant salesperson behavior and how trait competitiveness and long hours motivate various forms of deviance.<sup>2</sup> The result of their research brought to light "with surprising consistency" that hiring managers wanted

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<sup>1</sup> Alfie Kohn No Contest The Case Against Competition, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1986 / 1992

<sup>2</sup> Be Careful What You look for: The Effect of Trait Competitiveness and Long Hours on Salesperson Deviance And Whether Meaningfulness of Work Matters; Ronald Jelinek and Michael Ahearne. Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice, vol. 18, no. 4 (fall 2010), pp. 303–321. © 2010 M.E. Sharpe, Inc.

sales people who were competitive and willing to work long hours. I don't think that anyone reading this would argue their finding. They go on to surmise that "the negative relationship between fit and deviance should be a strong reminder of the need for rigorous hiring and screening practices."

**Lucifer Lesson 1:** For the HR professional who assumes the role of applicant screener – Partner with your sales management constituents to truly understand the role with which you are recruiting and screening. I was speaking with a seasoned sales trainer while writing this book and she talked a lot about the level of talent that passes through her training sessions. It's been less than stellar and new hire turnover is high. When I asked what she thought the problem was she mentioned that the folks in recruiting don't have a handle on the job of the sales rep or the cultural environment at the local level. That's some food for thought. I would recommend to the HR recruiters and screeners to spend a day riding with a seasoned sales rep in the field. Develop a relationship with the sales managers that they serve. Review the screening questions that you use and make sure that they align with the role and the values of the company. Truly understand how the compensation works, the hours required, and the working conditions. Ask screening questions that uncover fit for the role and the environment with which the role operates.

**Lucifer Lesson 2:** Make sure that organizational fit is weighted higher than trait competitiveness during the recruitment and selection process. Organizational fit provides the pathways to employee engagement and gives them a sense of control. In the case of our Lucifer, his "Lone Wolf" bravado is a key indicator that he lacks organizational fit. So, let's examine this for a minute. How do you screen for organizational fit? Start with your company's guiding principles. Ask questions that align with your company's values. For example, one of the guiding principles at this company reads: *We will always act in the best interest of our team, our organization and our customers.* What value is this guiding principle driving at? Trust, cooperation, and respect. Now let's think about the qualities of a person that would align with these values. We might look for someone who is committed to our vision, they treat others with consideration and courtesy, and they are accountable to the goals of the team. So what kind of interview questions might help you identify a candidate that would make a good cultural fit? First, you want to make sure that you are asking a solid behavior-based question, not a hypothetical-type question. Behavior-based questions provides a spring-board for the candidate to answer by describing the context of the situation, the task that required the action they took and the result of their action. A good behavior-based question that will help you understand the candidate's alignment with the company's culture of teamwork might sound like this: "Tell me about a time when you made a decision to work outside of the established principles of the organization, why did you make that decision, and what was the result?" This is a much better approach than asking the question in a hypothetical way. Hypothetical questions start with



“What would you do *if...*” While some people may argue that this type of question will get at underlying personality traits, any candidate can project what they *would* do, which is entirely different than what they actually do.

**Lucifer Lesson 3:** As the hiring manager/trainer are onboarding new sales hires, take the time to share with them the meaningfulness of the work that they will be doing to influence organizational fit to reduce the potential for deviant behavior. Make sure that they understand how they fit into the bigger picture and how their work is important to the overall well being of the team and the company. Reinforce the mission, vision, guiding principles and values. All too often this is reviewed during orientation, a.k.a. the first three days on the job. After that, the rest of the training on job duties are never really tied back to the all-important company values. Think about it, do your job descriptions link to the values? Does the training program continually link back to the company values? Can your new hires recite the company mission and core values three months after they’ve been hired? Can they communicate it correctly to customers? Friends? Family? And, more importantly, to other new hires down the road? If the answer is no, find ways to make your training continually reach back to the core values of the company. Some ways to do this might be during role-play evaluation; In addition to the core skills that are being practiced and observed, ask role-play observers to provide feedback on how the company values and principles were displayed during the role-play.

**Lucifer Lesson 4:** Reduce training hours to include more breaks and reflection. Sales people are not used to sitting in a seat all day long. They lose focus and become separated from the meaningfulness of the work they are doing during training workshops, which can increase the potential for deviant behavior. What I’ve learned from the front lines of the classroom is that those long hours most likely always contribute to the potential for sales people to go overboard at the bar. They are too cooped up for too long and when it’s time to cut loose, they do it in the spirit of go big or go home. Think about it, what is the start and stop time for your typical training workshop. In my experience the company always wants to stuff too much information into the amount of time that they have budget for. Training workshops usually start at 8:00 am and end at 5:00 pm, with a 10-15-minute break in the morning, an hour for lunch and a 10-15-minute break in the afternoon (quite frankly I feel that this is too long of day for training to be effective). But what usually happens is there is too much material to cover, the lunch break gets condensed, the breaks are rushed, you run over by 30 minutes and then there’s homework. Yes, it is the training facilitator’s job to keep the training on track, but no matter how hard we try we are often given direction to add content or allow time for “visiting dignitaries” who use up too much air. Before you know it, you’ve turned 7.5 hours of butts in seats into 8.5 hours. That’s enough to drive anyone to drink! My recommendation is to cut the seat time down, way down. Start at 8:30 and end at 4:30, or start at 8:00 and end at 4:00, or start at 8:00 build in two 30-minute breaks and honor the hour-long lunch. Also, be sure to add enough time for

proper debrief and reflection of key learning points. Give them time to digest and process key learnings before trying to push more into their brain.

**Lucifer Lesson 5:** Reward good organizational citizenship behavior and penalize poor organizational citizenship behavior. Organizational citizenship, as defined by BD BusinessDictionary is the extent to which an individual's voluntary support and behavior contributes to the organization's success.<sup>3</sup> By establishing strong values and reinforcing the importance of those values you will help develop good organizational citizenship. To do this you need to establish what the expectations are and the consequences of stepping over the boundaries. Recently I had a conversation with a director of organizational development at a large global conglomerate. She told me that her company established a “zero tolerance policy” for the entire sales organization. If anyone crosses or steps outside of the guardrails, they are fired, no matter how high they rank on the sales leader board. She went on to tell me how tough it is to for sales managers to take out the axe, especially when it falls squarely on the head of the uber producer.

Another interesting component of this story is how so many of the people in the cohort who collaborated in the poor behavior would not rat each other out – even the one individual who was most appalled at the behavior of his peers. As a sales manager or HR professional, how do you know that deviant behavior is happening before it’s too late, especially if no one is willing to come forward and report?

According to an article in the *Journal of Military Psychology*, there are three factors that seem to influence peer reporting of counterproductive workplace behavior:<sup>4</sup>

1. The emotional closeness between the person exhibiting the Counter Workplace Behavior and the person observing it. In this case they were somewhat close. All of the participants have been living with each other day and night for five straight days and were all encamped in a remote location without much freedom outside the property.
2. The severity of the misconduct observed and the presence of witness(s). While the misconduct was severe, to the participants they viewed it as goof-off pranks.
3. Peers are more likely to report the Counter Workplace Behavior (CWB) of colleagues when the conduct is severe, or when there are other witness(s) present and less likely to report when they are emotionally close to the person committing the CWB. In this case, the confessions started pouring out when the group learned that there was surveillance video and law enforcement was on its way to review said electronic witness! This turned

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<sup>3</sup> Read more: <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/organizational-citizenship.html>

<sup>4</sup> Situational Factors Affecting Peer Reporting Intentions at the U.S. Air Force Academy: A Scenario-Based Investigation Gordon J. Curphy, Frederick W. Gibson, Gary Macomber, Callie J. Calhoun, Leigh A. Wilbanks & Matthew J. Burger Pages 27-43 | Published online: 17 Nov 2009

their goof-ball pranks into severe misconduct with equally severe potential consequences.

Trainers and managers take note: When you make the work of the sales person meaningful, in both the context of training and the context of the job, you are providing a pathway to motivation and personal development. These pathways lead to empowerment. The more empowered your sales force the less likely they will be provoked by the nature of their competitiveness and the long hours they spend on the job and in training.

So, what are the hidden costs in this story? Let's walk through the fundamentals: We fired 11 sales people whose salary is \$55,000.00. The fated 11 were on the payroll for a total of thirteen weeks costing the company \$151,250.00 in base salary lost. Add to that the benefits costs, \$17,490 (healthcare, car allowance, disability and life insurance) that brings the cost to \$168,740.00. These are the surface costs, the wages paid during their 90-day orientation and onboarding period. Let's dive a little deeper into the hard costs. Consider the Pre-Hire costs – application processing, interviewing, pre-hire assessment cost, drug screening, background check, and agency fees; the sum total per hire for these costs is \$820.00 x 11 = \$9,020.00. We're up to \$177,760.00. Now we need to add the training costs which includes travel, transportation, housing, food and beverage, materials, and supplies equals \$28,241.00 – and let's not forget to add to that the cost to discharge everyone early, which includes re-booking change fees, corporate travel agent time, conference center penalties for breach of contract equals \$24,200.00. We're up to \$230,201.00. That's nearly a quarter of a million dollars.

If you think that's it, no way. Now, for the real hidden dollars, the soft costs. The costs that you don't consider. These are the BIG HUGE costs: Lost opportunity (vacancy cost), replacement cost, low morale cost, and lost customer cost!

Let's start with lost opportunity cost — if these 11 sales people performed at the level of others that graduated from the Sales Academy the company would have realized \$250,000.00 quota revenue per person multiplied by 11 = \$2,750,000.00. Our cost just jumped to \$2,773,201.00. Now, consider this, the terminations have left territories vacant causing account management to suffer ultimately resulting in lost customers. Don't think for one minute that our competitors won't jump on the chance to steal our customers when there is even a sniff of poor service or that no one is paying attention to the customer. Just one customer breach, with a three-year contract costs the company \$18,000.00 in annual revenue. \$18,000.00 x 11 = \$198,000.00. And what about the sales people that remain on the team, they have to pick up the slack for the terminated reps. They have to work longer hours, establish relationships with customers that they don't know well, they're overworked, their productivity starts to slide, and their morale drops to a level that might very well cost the company a voluntary turnover. If that isn't bad

enough, you have the cost of replacement for the terminated employee AND for the one you didn't anticipate replacing.

By now your head should be spinning. So, what did this Lucifer cost the company? Wait for it ... \$2,971,201.00. And to think that I originally estimated \$1MM. Ha! I was only \$2MM off base. That's a huge hidden cost!

As for the sole survivor? It was David, the guy who ran into me on the foot bridge that fateful Saturday. He went on to become a fine sales person.