Financial experts say that the economy is in a period of recovery, but no one is promising that an era of prosperity will soon be at hand, given the high rate of unemployment that has affected the nation’s workforce. Therefore, hospitality salespeople and marketers must continue to be diligent in this time of economic uncertainty.

We must ensure our job security by refusing to use the weak economy as an excuse for poor performance, by staying in front of our customers, and by continuing to use proven ‘best practices’ to reach sales success.

The current situation reminds me of a whitewater rafting trip I took years ago on the Colorado River in the Grand Canyon. We were about to head out, and our instructor was giving us last-minute safety lessons. He warned us that if we should capsize he might not be able to reach us immediately and that we had to be prepared to rescue ourselves. He told us to be resourceful and do everything we could to save ourselves until he could get to us. And I think that’s what we salespeople must do now. We must participate in our own recovery, be accountable for our actions, and realize there is no point in waiting for anyone else to throw us a lifesaver.

So how do business and salespeople orchestrate their own recovery plan? Here are eight fundamental keys.
Put the economy in perspective.
The economy has been falling, not failing. It’s down, but it’s down from the biggest economic boom of all time, the biggest housing boom of all time, and the easiest loan requirements of all time. Sure, home sales are down 33 percent, but even with this negative statistic, five million homes will still be sold this year.

All of this means that the low-hanging fruit of the recent past is a little higher in the tree. There’s still business in the marketplace—just not as much. We’re all going to have to work harder and smarter than ever before, but sales opportunities are still available.

Replay the crises that you’ve overcome in the past. Virtually every person and business has conquered at least one crisis. Now’s a good time to reflect on those memories and remember how you came through those crises and found yourself stronger. Remind yourself that tough times never last, but tough people do.

You’ll find that reflecting on a difficult period that you’ve already overcome will give you the confidence you need to conquer the current economic crisis. I truly believe that new growth and more prosperity are just down the road.

Decide that you will make it through the slow economy. This economic crisis is like a crucible that provides us an opportunity to do what’s necessary to recast and forge ourselves into something bigger, better, and stronger. We can’t control the events of our lives, but we can control what we think, believe, feel, and decide to do about those events.

The only way to come out of this crisis triumphant is to make a defiant decision to think and act like you can’t be stopped. Just as your muscles won’t grow stronger without your making the committed decision to push past your comfort zone into harder resistance, you can’t recast yourself in the event of a crisis without making a committed decision to be an unstoppable selling machine during the recession.

Strengthen your body and your mind. Because fear and worry hijack the mind, one of the best ways to stay healthy and focused during the economic crisis is to strengthen yourself, both physically and mentally. Start today on a committed exercise and fitness plan that will not only condition you to feel stronger than ever before, but that also will help you manage the stress and anxiety that you are feeling these days.

Condition your soul through daily meditation, or by writing down what you’re grateful for. You might also want to consider giving yourself a vacation from all of the bad news in the media every day. Feed your mind pure, powerful, and positive stories and information by reading biographies of people who have triumphed over crisis, by listening to inspirational music, and by watching uplifting movies.

No matter how bad things are for you or your business right now, rest assured there is someone out there who has it worse than you. Keep training to get better. If there’s ever a time to keep getting better at what you do, it’s during a down economy. Continuously learning and improving is the only way to be more effective and efficient than ever before and to ensure you are doing everything in your power to out-do your competitors.
Too often, successful salespeople and managers are overly confident in their abilities and in ‘their way’ to sell or do business. Then they hit some hard times, struggle, and start blaming the economy, when their own failure to keep learning and training is partly to blame for their slow period. When times are tough, salespeople can’t afford a single misstep.

Any person can improve through effective training. So, start reading a sales book during your lunch break, attend a public sales seminar, or get your company’s salespeople some outstanding training ASAP.

**Step up your high-impact sales activity.** During a tough economy it becomes mission critical to spend a greater percentage of time performing high-impact sales activities, which involve selling or prospecting to well-qualified *ideal buyer types* face-to-face or on the telephone. In other words, stop wasting so much time on things that don’t matter.

Recent research confirms salespeople on average spend only 90 minutes per day in high-impact selling activities. That’s a death rattle in a tough economy. Everyone must prioritize their time and make sure they schedule quality high-impact selling time every day and become more efficient in executing all the other tasks they have to perform.

**Take the modeling-for-success shortcut.** One other fundamental for achieving success rapidly in tough and uncertain times is to find a mentor, coach, or colleague who’s achieving the outcomes you desire and model his approach. Or find someone who has experience overcoming past economic crises and ask her what strategies she plans to employ. Spend time with this person so that you can observe the skill sets necessary to achieve success.

This is simply a shortcut as opposed to the trial and error approach most people take in their pursuit of success. You find someone who is achieving what you want to achieve in these economic times and then model his or her behavior. Just keep reminding yourself, if they can do it, you can do it.

Economic recovery will take place in the not-too-distant future, but we can’t forget that each and every salesperson is ultimately responsible for his/her own recovery. Use the challenges you are facing to energize and motivate yourself during the slow economy. And remember that if you make it a priority, sales success is possible. You know the saying, “What doesn’t kill you makes you stronger.” Well, it applies in sales too. If this economic period doesn’t put you out of business, it will make you a stronger and better salesperson.