

# Applying Stephen Covey's *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* for Pinnacle Performance



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Stephen Covey's *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* are a simple set of rules for life – powerful principles anyone can apply to improve their personal productivity and performance.

In this article, we'll overview each of the habits and how they apply to achieving Pinnacle Performance as a sales or customer service professional.

## Habit 1: Be Proactive ®

Covey states that this habit is the ability to control one's environment, rather than have it control you, as is so often the case. This habit is in perfect harmony with one my Pinnacle Performance *Essential Elements of Extraordinary Service*, "Responsiveness". This element affirms that customers want their needs met with speed and purpose and prefer service providers that take initiative and are proactive to their needs rather than them having to ask for assistance.

## Habit 2: Begin With The End In Mind ®

Covey describes this as the habit of personal leadership, the ability to lead oneself towards desired goals. In a meaningful way, this habit really is the foundation of my Pinnacle Performance teachings with focus on market-leading 'world-class' businesses and performers and how to apply their winning best practices and principles to individual efforts and the organization as a whole. In a nutshell, a sure path to achieving world-class performance is to *begin* with what world-class performance is, how it got that way, and then use that model to guide personal behaviors and those in your own organization.

## Habit 3: Put First Things First ®

Covey states that this is the habit of personal management and organizing and implementing activities in line with the goals established in habit 2. This habit represents the execution elements of Pinnacle Performance. Too often sales and service personnel *go through the motions* and don't follow any real process. Successful organizations and individuals recognize that success has a code and that by maintaining adherence to proven processes they can achieve their performance goals.

## Habit 4: Think Win-Win ®

This Covey habit is based on the principle that success is a natural extension of a co-operative 'win-win' approach over that of confrontational win-or-lose mindset. I see this all the time in sales organizations... Personnel try so hard to sell, to 'close the deal', that they lose focus of the most important person in the business relationship – the customer. By focusing on helping customers solve their needs/wants we properly position ourselves as trusted advisors (rather than salespeople) and create sustainable win-win relationships.

## Habit 5: Seek First to Understand and then to be Understood ®

This is Covey's habit of effective communication. My personal favorite, this principle goes hand-in-hand with Pinnacle Performance. A chief component of successful communication is the ability to actively listen to what is being said first before responding. Too often sales and service personnel do not seek first to understand and instead push their agenda and alienate potential customers. The Pinnacle Performance *Therapeutic Selling* model aligns with this habit by positioning personnel to behave as doctors and diagnose first, then prescribe.

## Habit 6: Synergize ®

Covey says this is the habit of creative co-operation, the principle that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. This is the glue of the Pinnacle Performance 'winning team' culture framework. Pinnacle Performance organizations recognize the sum of collective knowledge is greater than individual wisdom and they encourage information sharing and an environment of open communication where employees are comfortable contributing their feedback and ideas to improve performance.

## Habit 7: Sharpen the Saw ®

According to Covey, this is the habit of self-renewal, enabling personal growth and development. This is the reason many sales/customer service trainings fail, organizations conduct a one-time training and don't continue to sharpen the saw. This is the reason most individuals are not Pinnacle Performers. They attend a training session and don't continue to sharpen the saw. To truly create world-class performance and lasting success, you must consistently sharpen the saw with a disciplined and committed training regimen and personal continuous improvement.

Steve Ferrante is the CEO & Trainer of Champions of Sale Away LLC., providing Pinnacle Performance Sales, Customer Service and Winning Team Culture training, speaking and professional development services to success-driven businesses throughout North America. For more information on Steve and Pinnacle Performance services visit [saleawayllc.com](http://saleawayllc.com)