

The Wet-Noodle Economy

Industry Week

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People who stand around waiting for a recession to end--or wondering how long a recovery will last, or how strong it will be--are robbing the economy of strength. Any salesperson who lets a hot prospect get away is hurting his company's sales, his industry's sales, and the general economy.

"The economy" is not some giant creature "out there." It is the sum of what each of us does. Every salesperson who stands back from the action when a customer is struggling to make a purchase constitutes as great a threat to our economy as the aggressive, well-trained foreign competitor.

Too often, employees--managers included--blame "the company" for their personal economic woes. In recent years many companies have indeed made layoffs or cut wages. But how much of that failure begins with the individual who lets the company down? And how much of the blame should fall on managers or owners who fail to turn their workers on and do not provide the environment and training that enable people do get out and sell?

To a large degree--in the retail, industrial, and service sectors--we have become a nation of order takers.

That doesn't build a dynamic economy. America's would-be providers of goods and services are pushing a wet noodle because their own (and others') "salespeople" are not pulling the goods through the marketplace with salesmanship.