

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



As founder and president of The Pinecrest Group, MIKE FERRELL has worked with many companies in hiring, training and managing sales forces as well as creating and implementing business and marketing plans for over 20 years. He has been involved in eight different start-ups and worked with companies as small as one to as large as 500 employees. Over the past 10 years, Mike has trained and coached financial services providers on how to grow their businesses using this approach. He has presented workshops and seminars all over the country, with over 10,000 salespeople completing them. Clients include Ameriprise, Transamerica, RBC Dain Rauscher and Piper Jaffray.

MEET THE AUTHOR: MIKE FERRELL

How has your experience shaped your methodology?

I have been involved in 11 different start-up businesses, and in each of those situations, we had to create a business plan for bankers and investors. The creation of this approach grew out of frustration in going through an exercise that not once ever helped us grow a successful business. It was only after we started focusing on the *specific* things we needed to do to grow our businesses did we achieve success. The Business Funnel Approach takes the business owner down a step-by-step path that gets down to the basic actions that need to happen in order to reach their goals. In working with businesses and sales practices, I have found that most of the time they focus on a goal, when they would be much more successful in focusing on the specific actions that need to happen to reach that goal.

Considering the current state of the economy, what kind of hope does this book offer to small businesses?

There will always be up and down cycles in the economy. If history is our teacher, we know that the economy will be up and it will be down. I tell business owners to focus on what they can control and quit worrying about what they can't. If the product or service is fundamentally good, then creating focus on all the things you need to do to get that product or ser-

vice in the hands of the customer is absolutely critical – no matter what the state of the economy is. The business approach helps business owners and managers stay focused on what they can control and, with that, achieve the results they are looking for. Successful businesses are not nearly as affected by bad economies as unsuccessful ones.

What is the one thing you'd want people to keep in mind while reading about and using the Business Funnel Approach?

The Business Funnel Approach is only as good as how it gets used. If you go through the exercise, create your plan and then never look at it again it won't work. This process is simple and straightforward, but the key is using it day in and day out. Once the plan is created, it should be looked at every day initially and then at the very least every week after that. In order for any plan to work, it has to be implemented. The focus should be on the tasks and timelines and tracking the key milestones. In order for this approach to work for any business there also needs to be careful consideration of where the business is at today and what are the specific priorities that need to be focused on to achieve the desired results. The Business Funnel Approach can work for anyone with the right commitment to the plan.