

Li Costi

Sales Leadership in the Investment Industry

WITH GUI COSTIN

Enlightenment of Change Podcast

CONNIE WHITMAN: Welcome to Enlightenment of Change on web talk radio.com. I'm your host, Connie Whitman. You know, I'm excited that you're here this week. So here's the deal, right? The name of the show, Enlightenment of Change, and as soon as we hear that word change, what happens? We get a knot in our stomach. So to help you navigate again, whatever change is happening in your life, whether you've chosen it or it's been thrust upon you, in the show notes, you will find my communication style assessment. Two reports will be sent to your email. First report, just spotlight your natural communication superpowers, how you show up naturally. Flip side, when you're communicating with people who are 180 degrees different than how you communicate, ah, how's your message landing? So you get a secondary report with that lowest score. That's the one I really want you to dial in and be mindful of, because we will always want to make sure no matter who we're speaking with, our communication is spot on. That is how we can make change a heck of a lot easier. So again, my gift to you link is in the show notes. Now, my quote today to set the stage for my guest and my conversation is by Jack Welch. And Jack says, good business leader. Create a vision, articulate the vision passionately, own the vision, and relentlessly drive it to completion. So business growth, I, I believe, doesn't happen by accident. And I love the quote because it really dials into the component that help an organization, right, grow and scale or sustainable scaling, using clear and passionate leadership with a measure of accountability. And to me, that's the big word, the accountability of self and our teams. So who is my guest today? His name is Gui Costin. He's the founder and CEO of Dakota, a powerhouse in in the investment service industry, Since its inception in 2006, Dakota has helped clients raise over \$40 billion. At the ho. At the heart of Gui, leadership is a singular profound mission to be a mentor and foster career growth. He is a leader in sales and marketing, and his passion lies in educating investment firms on the processing and procedures they

can implement to scale their business. So Gui, thanks so much for being on and sharing your zone of genius with us.

GUI COSTIN: Thanks so much for having me. Thrilled to be on Connie. Yeah,

CONNIE WHITMAN: A real pleasure. So tell me first, like what is it that you do? Let's, let's start with that.

GUI COSTIN: So we've two businesses, but the primary focus is growing investment firms. And we do in one of two ways. One, we do the work ourselves. So we have a nine person sales team who covers the country and goes out and raises capital for the different funds that investment firms have. We work with about six different investment firms, and then we took the database that we built over about 15 years from 2006 to 2019 of investors across the country and it's all institutional investors, all publicly available information. But as you can imagine, it's an enormous amount of information and keeping all that up to date and keeping track of it. It's hundreds of thousands of contacts. And so what we've done is we've created a business where our other investment firms, instead of hiring us to sell for them, they can simply log into our database, go to the city that they're going to visit, where it's Boston or San Francisco, LA, Chicago, Philly, Miami, what have you, and they can see all the potential institutional investors that they would want to call on. So nice, a little bit shorter way. We keep all in invest most investment firms over 1100, their sales CRMs up to date.

CONNIE WHITMAN: Nice. That's it's an awesome, what, it's so funny because now AI is all the rage, right? The technology is all the rage in 2006 that you were kind of a visionary with that. What, what was the catalyst for you to say, Hey, wait a minute. I think we can do,

GUI COSTIN: You know what? I'm so happy you brought that question up, Connie, because if you think about there's one leverage point amongst any others that a salesperson can have, and I, it's a CRM, it's loading up all the information that you, who you call on the meetings you've scheduled. Let's keep it that simple. So you can do rapid recall. Otherwise, as we all know, you're using an Excel spreadsheet, a yellow pad of paper, a sticky note, right? And so if you've done a hundred meetings in the past 90 days or 180 days, and then you want to go do all your follow up or time's gone on, where, where do you find all that information, right? I always just, Salesforce was invented in 1999. I started using it back then and it just managed my life as an individual salesperson. So naturally when we started the business, I was using it to manage the business, and then I had to convince, quote unquote, my teammates, if you will, to use it as well. And it's been such a grand slam because it's a, it really 10 x is your time, because if I, if I called on you and did a meeting with you four months ago, right? But then you multiply that times 10 of all the different people I met with four months ago, your brain can't remember all that information. You needed to go in with one or two clicks and see who you all met with. So then you can do quick follow up.

CONNIE WHITMAN: I love it. It's, it really, it's about efficiency. The more we can get done, the more opportunity we have, which means the more results we're going to get on the back end. But that's brilliant that you adopted Salesforce and then you create, you kind of leveraged it to create your own database, which is, I mean, that's why Amazon is so darned, right? He, he's a database that's, that's why he has a bazillion people right from all over the world. But it started with building a database from textbooks and then he perfected that system and then went to the next, and then he created scalability because of the

database. So I just love that connection that you made. That's, that's pretty fricking smart, dude, you know?

GUI COSTIN: Well, thanks.

CONNIE WHITMAN: Yeah. I love it. All right, next question. How have you accomplished raising 30 billion? Yes, people, billion, not mil million, \$30 billion. How have you done it?

GUI COSTIN: 1, 2, 2 words. Sales process. And the only way you can effectively, or there's, there, there's kind of two ways to do it. Sales process or highly opportunistic, which means you would have to really just raise a lot of money in very large amounts. So 400 million here, 300 million there, 800 million, you know what I mean? That's not as realistic for the broader base of the investment community with over 12,000 investment firms. And the way that you do it, it's an incredibly competitive business. And if you think about the, the buyers, if you will, think of your financial advisor, think of the CIO of an a college endowment. Think of a CIO of a state pension fund, a teacher's pension fund, an employee pension fund, and you know, New York calm. And if you're using New York State as an example, they have people like us calling on them every single day wanting to get a meeting. And so they probably get two to 300 meeting requests a day. So it's highly competitive. There's obviously a lot of rejection. So if you set up a sales process and you bring the team in two way process, it takes away a lot of that emotion and it makes the whole process very consistent. And that's the key is consistency and sales process. Does that.

CONNIE WHITMAN: Yeah. And, and you know, the, once we create the sales process that it's duplicate, easily duplicatable, then I can make it part of my habits, and then I'm not overthinking everything. And then

that takes the emotion out of it, that takes the fear out of it, because we have a good, and it's a good habit. Let me comment that. It's a good habit. You haven't deformed a bad habit as long as the sales process is coherent. Logical. And again, it's that rinse and repeat mentality. So I, I love it. Yeah. I'm all about the sales process, so I, I agree a hundred percent. All right. So what, I wrote a book actually, the easy sales process. I love Seven Steps to Sales Success. So you're talking my language there, brother from another mother, right? Let's

GUI COSTIN: Go. Well, let's go. I

CONNIE WHITMAN: Love it. I love it. All right, so what does it take, or what do you see that it takes for a really, a good sales person in the world of investments? What does it takes to get good at it?

GUI COSTIN: Well, there's, there's four things in our, in my book, meaning the true book that I've written called The Dakota Way. There's four core principles. But, so, you know, first off, you have to set clear expectations with your boss. So portfolio managers of investment firms, I love 'em to death. They've made my career, right? But there can be a disconnect between what they believe they, you should be raising for them, and then what you should be. So it's like this golf one, you need to set expectations. So you and I agree on exactly what success looks like and my day-to-day activities. And then we have to have a plan each week that I'm going to report to you against my results. Two, we have to establish the tam, right? So success comes down to are you calling on the right buyers? That's a key component of it. I call it the tam. Then do you have a systematic approach for calling on those right buyers? We do it through city scheduling. I'm going to Boston for day of meetings. I want to book out five meetings, three, and here's the killer is point number three. It's very pedestrian, what I just described. It's a

grind. Sending cold emails, booking meetings, sending 30 emails, getting two responses. So, but you have to do that. You have to convince yourself you're a professional meeting setter upper. However, once you get in the meeting, you're now pitching a very sophisticated, complicated product. You now have to become a master messenger. So you have to bring this very complicated investment story to life. So the person across the table from you can get it. And there, I'm not going to get into the art of it, but there's a complete art. So one side of the coin, professional meeting, set upper, other side of the coin, sophisticated storyteller. Then the fourth component is the CRM. You need to be able to log the meetings you've done in your CRM, so you can do rapid recall of all the past stuff that you've done, and you're not looking all over the place. And if you can do that. So it's those four things. Setting expectations, focusing on your team, becoming a master messenger, housing all that information in a CRM and just keep repeating the process.

CONNIE WHITMAN: Yeah, again, it's the rinse and repeat. So I have to ask you a question, and I don't know if you see this, but I see this all the time. You know, we've been told you have to be a good storyteller. I agree with that. But I often see though, as people go into their story, they get lost in their own story and they're disconnected from the client or whoever the person is in front of them. Do you see that happening a lot? Or, or have you remediated that with your training? I'm just curious, because I see, still see it a lot.

GUI COSTIN: In our business. 100%. Do you want to know why the people that you're with normally that are pitching are analysts, right? They work for the investment firm. They're not salespeople. So I'll give you how you and I was taught this in 2005. Short answer first. So if you ask an analyst, Hey, what do you think v you know, give me the

investment thesis on Visa, the stock. I mean, they could go on for 30 straight minutes and not miss a beat, right? It's like, no, no two minutes. Answer the question. Short answer first. So now you can pause and they can ask questions, then it gets into a conversation. Yeah. So the simple answer is, please short answer first, no monologues.

CONNIE WHITMAN: Yeah. Almost think of an executive summary, right? You're giving them the executive summary and then they're gonna ask questions of the hot buttons for them, right? That whoever that person is, like, yeah, it should be about the client in front of you, not about your story and all the research you did, right? So I love that. Thank you. That, that's such a executive summary. That's the answer, right? Keep it, keep it, keep it simple. Yeah, it works, right? The kiss principle,

GUI COSTIN: But, but, but you really just kind of unearth the most important point about that is don't give them everything in the answer. Let them select then what they want to come back with,

CONNIE WHITMAN: Right? 'cause now you know what the hot button is or what's top of mind for them as whatever the situation is. There's probably several glitches within their situation. Otherwise they wouldn't be talking to the sales rep. There's a need there. Now, if you start going blah, blah, blah, blah, and you, you dump on them, they're gonna say, I have to think about it because you've given them too much information. They can't process it that quickly. They're go, it's gonna debilitate them to do nothing. That's craziness. Right? Right. So that executive summary, I love it. I love it, I love it. Because I now, you know, salespeople we're told, love it. You have egos. Do you think ego is necessary for a salesperson? Curious?

GUI COSTIN: I think as I, you know, I have two, I have a bunch of lacrosse playing, you know, boys in college and now out of college. And my one son's a defenseman, the youngest, he's a junior. And this is the, the point of the story is amnesia. He is insane amnesia. Like all the great quarterbacks in the NFL, they don't remember the play before. They don't remember the interception. They don't remember why they got scored on. Right? So I think at the end of the day, yes, ego, I'd say confidence and preparedness gives you confidence. So preparedness, but also I think kind of not, not dwelling on why someone's not getting back to you or, you know, all of that. If you can just keep moving forward, I think is the number one thing. And then, you know, ego kind of to me says confidence. How do you get confidence? The number one thing, if anybody's listening about any product is know the knowable that will get your ego and your confidence through the roof. Know the knowable about your product because you can't know everything, especially when you're younger, getting into a situation, but know the knowable.

CONNIE WHITMAN: Yeah, it, it's interesting 'cause my kids played hockey. One played hockey in college. So it, it's the same thing when they were little, they, they would say, they come, oh my defense did this. Right? Have two goalies too. Yes. The most expensive part of the hockey sport. But they, and we'd get

GUI COSTIN: Hardest as a mom. That's the hardest as a parent, goalie parent, no harder position.

CONNIE WHITMAN: Yeah. 'cause the light goes off every time they make a mistake. Right. And they score. But here's the funny part, they were younger, right? In developing their skills, we'd get in the car and what would they do? They'd deflect my defensemen, this happened,

that broke down. And I'd say, are you perfect? No. Are you the coach? No. I said, so all you could control is you, here's my question. That goal that went in, whatever it was, was it a good goal? Yeah, no, that was a good goal. All right. How about the second goal? Was that a good goal? No, I should have had that one. Tell me what you did wrong. Oh, my angle is up. Whatever. Right? So we dissect it and I'd say that was a good goal. What do you mean they scored? I go, but you learned from it. Right? And I think that's what you're trying to say too, is the ego isn't, I'm great and the rest of my team sucks. It's, wait a minute, I made a mistake, or that didn't go as I thought it was going to go. What could I have done differently? And I think that's where we park the ego, learn from it. But we have to show, and that builds confidence, I think, too. Right?

GUI COSTIN: There's no doubt. And I think what you're saying is check your ego at the door. Yeah. And be a lifelong learner. Right. Be willing to learn from your mistakes. Anything that could happen. Yeah. Everyone's opinion has merit. Right? Just listen, be a good listener. Sometimes you're not going to take all the advice that you get, but yeah, I couldn't agree more there.

CONNIE WHITMAN: Yeah. Funny. It's just funny 'cause you know, we all do have a little bit of an ego. Yeah. All right. Now my next question, how do you humble yourself and really become that person that actually becomes the closer, right? Again, with that ego piece of it. But how do we approach people humbly, you can't be a braggadocios jerk, right?

GUI COSTIN: Right. I, I think you have to have intense compassion and understanding of what your, what your buyer, if you will, what your potential, your prospect is, of what their needs are and what they're listening for. And that only, you only can get into that through q and a

and build a relationship and asking questions if you jump in too fast, talking about your product and not, you know, really understanding what their needs are, what their problems are. And remember, every good product solves a problem. The bigger the problem, the better the product, the more expensive the product, the more profitable the product. Think biotech and, you know, curing cancer, right? Start to think about drugs or chips like Nvidia, right? You whatever's solving a big problem. And so in our world of probably selling something that might be a lot less than that, there's always a problem that your product solves for, but you have to ask questions and you have to really understand where they're coming from before you dig into the product and getting to know them. So I think it's, I think it's problem, problem, problem. Question, question, question. Until it becomes so abundantly clear where then you're going to come in to start the discussion about your particular solution.

CONNIE WHITMAN: Yeah. And, and I love that. And I agree, and I, my, when I get to my step with this, the one listening, I, it's funny, Gui, I never had listening as a separate step in my process. And then after meeting and observing and talking and with with salespeople, I'm thinking, wow, they really aren't listeners. They ask their question, they go, ha and they write a note or two and then they're on to their next question. And I was like, oh my God, they missed a question in there. They should have asked. That's the act of listening. When you have the follow up question, you can't prepare for it. It shows up when you're present in front of the person. So I love that problem, problem, problem, question, problem, problem question, maybe follow up question. Right? And that's how we, we dig in. So I believe that we should be listening 70% of the time, 70 to 80% of the time. Because, and, and my other, and one of the thing I wanted to comment on, and I share this with every team. I, I coach or teach Stephen Covey's seven habits of highly

successful people. To me, everybody, every young person especially should be reading that book. But his fifth habit says, seek to understand before being understood. And he says it much more eloquently. But that's exactly what you just said. It's that principle of shut your mouth, ask the question, but then actively listen to ask those. 'cause when you start asking the follow up questions, now we're digging into the root of the problem. And now you, you get a home run when you make your recommendation. 'cause you're spot on. It's so clear for the client. And I guarantee the other sales reps perhaps aren't doing that.

GUI COSTIN: They're going to guide you by asking the questions. They'll guide you to the answer you should be delivering when, when it's your turn to go. Yeah.

CONNIE WHITMAN: And it should be obvious, right? The solution, right?

GUI COSTIN: It should be obvious.

CONNIE WHITMAN: Exactly. It should, it should. I always tease, Gui, I say there should be like a light from the heavens going tal. Like this is what the client needs, right? It should be that crystal clear to you so you're not, you know, forcing the square peg in the round hole as they say. Yeah.

GUI COSTIN: Now this is the old head on young shoulders is hard to do sometimes you, a lot of times I'll go through the q and a like that problem solution, you know, with the whole question. Alright, you know what, this is not a great fit. I don't think our product is really a great fit for what you're looking No, no, no, no. Geeky. No, no. Actually it is. I just wanted, you know, well as I was listening to you, you know, I don't really

see that you guys are in a position to be raising capital right now where you know, you don't really need this. This is not how you, you relationships and sometimes they then sell you and you don't have to do anything, but you're being authentic. You're like, Hey, from what I heard, I don't think so.

CONNIE WHITMAN: I doing the right thing. Right? Yeah. That's really what you just, just doing the right thing for the client, right? And our job really, we, I think we have the best job in the world as salespeople. 'cause we get to help people every day who gets to say that, right? So it's kind of cool. They have a problem. We have the solution show up and, and share it logically. Let's talk about culture for a minute. Why do you think the culture within the organization is really important for the salesperson and maybe even the sales leader more importantly?

GUI COSTIN: It's a, I mean, it's a loaded question that I could go on forever about. So culture's, how you treat this is again, one person's opinion. The culture is how you treat people. And if you think what you want in the sales, just the sales organization, it doesn't matter if you're a two person sales organization, five or 10. You want to come in the office and have low aida, high performance. And you want to be focused on executing the sales process. Not having all the massages internally with the boss. Everyone unfocused, not knowing what they're doing. The boss dropping, you know, one liners or passive aggressive behavior or thinking they're being funny when they're not. And then it gets in the sales person's head, you need each person at the company, right? Jamie's been doing all of the, the videoing here, you know, on our video team. So I keep referencing him, but, but it's like if I'm always messing with those guys or saying stuff or making a flip comment or doing anything like that, it can get them unfocused, right? So culture and how you treat people is truly the most important thing of any organization. A

team, a, a company, a family, like how you use your words is everything. Because you need low aita, high performance. And if you have the opposite, which is high volatility, you get lower performance, it's no fun to be at work, then the death nail is your best people leave. Now you have to train a whole new group of people. And those best people knew your product better than anyone. They had a relationship with the customers. And now you're having to replace that. People don't like put a price tag on what it cost to replace people who know your product and your company in way of doing things. I guarantee you it's 50 times more than people would actually put a price on it. So keeping your best people, making people enjoy coming to work, create that low odd to high performance type culture.

CONNIE WHITMAN: Yeah, I, I love it. And I remember, you know, 40 something years ago when I started in insurance, I, you know, I was a kid, Gui. And I sold, I met with a business owner and I guess I always had a business mentality. I didn't realize, you know, in my early twenties that extent. But I was so curious as to this person's business. I got to know him, his family, the daughters, you know, they were little girls really well and I didn't have kids at the time. I love kids. So I was me, right? I showed up as me. Well, fast forward, I sold my first million dollar life policy and this was back in the eighties. That was a big deal, right?

So I come in the next day on cloud nine, I go into my sales manager and I said, guess what? And he what? And I said, I sold a million dollar policy. And I'm thinking, you know, let's announce it to everybody in here with other 43 reps. He looked at me and he goes, why didn't you sell 2 million? I was like, there you go. Hated him. Can I tell you I hated him? And just as an aside note, when I was training, we got in the car and I didn't like something he did. I didn't know why, Gui, because number, the numbers didn't make sense what he was doing. And I'm a

numbers person. So we got in the car and I said, I don't know what you did. Because I was just, I was there maybe two weeks. I said, but I don't want that business. Give it to one of the other reps screaming at me, you idiot, you're never going to make it. You're a moron. All the way back to the office. I lasted five years. Because back then, you have to remember, I'm sharing my age here, but back then you had to stay with the company five years. If you didn't, you were a jumper and then you wouldn't find another job. So I stuck it out the five years. But I, I'll tell you, I run like hell at the end of that. Because he was horrific. So don't do that to my leaders listening. Do what Gui is saying. Like, can you be nice? You know?

GUI COSTIN: Yeah. And it's the, the kindness is everything, right? And in a situation like that, again, that's the classic how you just crush someone's spirit, right? Because then he had the opportunity to have you love him, right? And he chose another path which caused you to hate him. And it was just on the words he used. That's all it was just on the words he used. Yeah. I mean it's crazy, right? If you think about what it is, it, it's all the words that he used. And everyone remembers that one word or that one line that someone said,

CONNIE WHITMAN: 40, 42 years later.

GUI COSTIN: Oh, exactly. 42 years later. That's all you need to know. I was a golf coach, I played college golf and I was the golf coach for our high school team for nine years. When last four years my son was on the team. I always said, they said, well what do you think like your secret to success was? And they said, well, in golf it's very simple as a coach, it's not what you say, it's what you don't say. And I always said, each day I had five seconds of coaching and that was it. I got them unbelievable uniforms and I was incredibly positive. And all I really

wanted them to do was focus on their own game when they're on the course. That was it. Not another word. Because every little word that you might say now it's in their brain. They're on the sixth hole. They're like, I can't believe coach has said that is man, you know, it's like, no, no, no, no, no, no. This is, this is about you being successful and I'm stepping out of the way. So I just got them great uniforms and did my five seconds of coaching was very positive and let them just be them. And we had the kids had amazing success.

CONNIE WHITMAN: And the thing is, and this is with salespeople too, after you observe them, like let them do their jam, right? Do it then observe it and then go back and, and this, when I do my field coaching, I'll say to the salesperson, what could you or the coach, what could you have done? What did you do? Well I always start with that. And then if you had a do over, let's make, what would you have done differently? They don't need me to tell them. They know exactly where they glitched. They didn't phrase it right. What my body language, they know exactly and I go, my work here is done. They know how to self-assess. People know. It's like you go in and you go, how are your numbers? They know their numbers. Let's talk about how do we get your numbers up? Not let's talk about the numbers of what was right. Let's, let's scale it, let's grow it. And I think with coaches, leaders, they dig into the wrong thing. So maybe it's their ego. They need to park, Gui, right? Wow.

GUI COSTIN: 1000000000%. Oh my goodness. Yes. And their lips too. Yeah. Yeah.

CONNIE WHITMAN: I love it. What metrics, you know, we talked about the CRM before, but what metrics do you feel sales leaders should measure? And what, what do you measure, right? Like so

GUI COSTIN: The only things that matter most. So that's all we do. You have to measure the only things that matter most in our software business, two things matter most daily, first time demos set up re-engage demos. That's it. And because what ends up happening is if we get those, we know there's a waterfall effect after our accountant executives get the demo or get, they're so good because we've coached them up and they're very versatile. There's a waterfall effect of closing about 25 to 30%. We close. Nice. So, but the hard part is sending the 30 emails to get two meetings and, and making the team understand that that's the most important thing at the company. I wouldn't be shooting here with you right now if our BDRs aren't setting up first time demos and reengage in size and making sure, and then I don't criticize when they do, you know, three and two on a day versus 15 and 12, right? I never, I never make a comment. I say great job if they do four and three, awesome, awesome work. Just always reminding them what, because it's the hardest job, it's most emotional job of the company. But those metrics, you have to figure out what numbers truly matter most. And there, there only can be one, two, or three. You can't have so many numbers, right?

CONNIE WHITMAN: Well it is, isn't it just like a, when you, when you're selling to the person, if you go in with 10 options, they're not going to do anything. It, it's overwhelmed and they, they didn't what? So if you can narrow it down to that two or three options, keep it real simple, real dialed in. Now all of a sudden there's such clarity that they're ready to pull the trigger faster, we can move the sales process faster, right? By having that clarity. So it's the same thing with our teams. If we can have that clarity, if no, no, no, no, I only want you to do these two things. Now we're giving them something to focus double down their efforts on

and they're going to get better so much faster. That's really what you're saying, right? Did I understand that correctly?

GUI COSTIN: Yes, a hundred percent.

CONNIE WHITMAN: Yeah. What metrics, other than first time meetings should we be looking at, especially in that fundraising realm?

GUI COSTIN: So, so this is a little looser metric, but I think the key thing before the first time demo, I mean, those are the two numbers that we care about the most. From a result perspective, you have to make sure you're calling on qualified buyers. Yeah. So if you think about that as a, a sort of qualitative metric, as much as a quantitative metric, a lot of people, we, we call it we grow apples and we sell to apple buyers. We don't call an orange buyers to try to convince them to buy apples. We're not in the convincing business. So one big metric are if you're selling apples, are you calling on apple buyers? Now we've gotten way past that point, but that is a core principle of Dakota. It's on our website every 14 core principles. And in the beginning, I had to make sure I said that because I'd say, okay, how, how that, how was the meeting and I banned great meeting, can't come back and say we had a great meeting. I said, because I want to know what happened in the meeting. What's the current status, what's the next step? I also need to know that there's an end zone, right? I don't want to be playing football with missing two end zones, okay? We need to score points, all right? Don't come back to me please. It's not good for you. So I'm not saying so much come back to me, but don't come back to me, which is really a reflection on you. Because you're the salesperson. You're not here to please me. I want you to grow your career. And we have to have a field that has end zones. And we have to understand that we're calling on apple buyers if we have apples. You can't believe, I mean all these

software business have people in the middle called qualifiers. We don't have qualifiers. We go in qual like we know before we call that they're a, they're an orange buyer or they're an Apple buyer. You know what I mean? I do. And so I think I do right in terms of like that I just can't emphasize because then it just becomes reps against qualified buyers. And then what are the reps you're looking, what are the results from the reps? First time demos, reengage demos.

CONNIE WHITMAN: Boils right back down to those two strategic approaches, right? We, we, again, it's got to be logical. It has to be duplicatable and it's, it has to be EAs not that it, not that we, our jobs should be easy, but they shouldn't be a struggle to achieve whatever the objective is. And that's what you're talking about. You're just dialing it down to make it simple so they can rinse and repeat, grow the skill. And now, you know, we're hitting it out of the park for sure. Last question, but this I'm really curious about. Yeah. Face-to-face or zoom meetings, have you found, because you, you do a lot of analytics on the back end. Have you found that there's a difference whether it's zoom or face-to-face? Because face-to-face. Sometimes if I have to travel across the country, I'm sitting in a plane, right? The windshield time, if you will. But what, what has your analytic shown? I'm curious.

GUI COSTIN: Face-to-face all day long. Twice on Sundays. Okay, so let's just start with that. Don't be very emphatic that I will never do Zoom over an opportunity to get face-to-face. That being said, there are economics involved. Yeah. And there is time involved. If you have five meetings in LA and they're all legitimate meetings because you've qualified them and then you're going to go for three days and you have 15 meetings, then go. If you picked LA for three days and you booked one meeting and it's a great meeting, then you convert to zoom. Even if it's a great meeting Now, if it's a massive anchor meeting and, but

that's, that's a lot of money, time, energy and everything for one meeting. You can get away with Zoom. However, my team has come back to me over the past since Covid and said, face-to-face is a joke relative to Zoom. I mean, it's like literally you walk in, oh my gosh, four oh Rob, hey, hey Nick, everything done. 15 minutes. All right, we're good. Let's go. We're buying, you know, zoom. It's like, and know everybody. I'm the phone. No. Like if we were on Zoom right now, if I was like, like I'm, I'm here at my anchor desk, I have no phone right here. I mean, half the time I'm still sneaking in. Oh my God, my kid just texted me. You know? Oh, what, what'd you say? Oh yeah. You know what I mean? Like, you can't do that face distracted, right? You can't do that face to face. Like you have everyone, you're in a conversation, you're building a relationship, you're seeing the whites of their eyes. So face-to-face all day long, twice on Sundays. And then of course zoom for efficiency, you know what I mean? It's never zoom. Oh, I'm in place. Right? So yeah. But also economics play a, you know, big role in that and time, right? So I get it. But if you, I mean we've had so much success. We know we do city scheduling. That's our game, that's our sales process. Every single BDR has to have five cities. They're scheduling at any given time and every single day at 7 45 to close out the 7 45, around 7 49, each of the 14 have to go around in 30 seconds. Say, okay, I'm scheduling for LA on November 5th, blah, blah. You know, they, they do their five cities and if I hear four, remember I'm the CEO 'cause we have everybody on the call. I'll call the AE there. I'm like, he only said four cities. He's like, gotcha. I'm like, 'cause we're listening, right? Because if you let, we're letting them down if we're not making them adhere to the sales process. So that's how seriously we take that. And the more we can get the AEs in an airplane, in a car, on a train to get face-to-face, the higher the results are. And they're by a pretty dramatic margin.

CONNIE WHITMAN: Yeah. And you know, and I love that. And, and it's funny because you mentioned accountability in there. That's the word that popped into my head. If they are only four, don't have to embarrass the person you call the, the leader and say, they only mentioned four. What's going on? Hold you accountable, right? Because you're saying the system works accountability on you, but it's also an accountability on the leader and it's also an accountability on that salesperson. Now there could be a reason why we should understand that if that, if that situation happens over and over and over again, what's going on? Right? But we have to hold people accountable. And I don't think we're doing a real good job of that in our, in our world lately. Right? We're letting people off the hook and you're hired to do a job. I'll give you all the tools to do it, but you gotta do the job that we're expecting you to do. Otherwise we're, we're wasting time and money and we're wasting each other's time and money. And that's not cool. Right. And we have to be a little bit efficient there. So yeah. Anything else before we, that was my last question. We're out of time, but do you have anything else to add for the people listening to the show that you think we didn't hit that you would like to include?

GUI COSTIN: You know, okay. The, the one thing I would say as a follow up to that, and I guess I can make this a universal comment. As a sales leader, you're messing with people's lives and their careers and you have an obligation to help them grow their careers and get what they want out of life. Whether you like that or not, that's the job of a sales leader. And so you really, and each person's a little bit different. You can have your sales process, which is number one, but every person's a little bit different. Messing with them, getting in their head, not setting clear expectations, not setting them up for success. You're just damaging their career. And you have a really big responsibility as a leader, I think. And you have to take that responsibility seriously. And I think there's a

lot of information out there, kind of that pe like including your podcast, that people can listen to and focus on to get what they need to help people grow their careers.

CONNIE WHITMAN: And, and I know you're passionate about that in your bio, right? It has that you're a mentor, you know, most CEOs don't put that in, right? I'm good at whatever the skill is for the job. But that mentorship, I believe now, especially you're much younger than me, but you know, at this point in my career, I feel that that mentorship, it's, it's the paying. If that's the legacy, it's not, yeah. I mean, right. Financially we leave a legacy, but we don't often think of the skill that I can impart on someone else so that now they can thrive. That's, that's legacy. And I think it is important that leaders out there, it's not just about earning the money. Yeah, it's nice being a leader. You get an override on everybody. Yippy ca it's about how can you help that person? Yes, it'll put more money in your pocket, but it'll help them thrive long term to build their family, create productive kids like you were saying with your boys playing the sports and everything, being a team player. We have to instill this in our leaders today to not, you were good at sales. Are you good as a sales leader? If you're not, then go back to sales. Right? But we have a responsibility in, in a leadership position. I really do believe that. And I love that you're passionate about that component. Because I think we forget about it because it's always about the results, right? The money. But it's, but we can make more money if we all show up together in a unified, really deliberate way. Right? I love

GUI COSTIN: It. A hundred percent. Yeah.

CONNIE WHITMAN: Yeah. Back at you. Thank you so much. So everyone, here's the deal. If you need more Gui in your life, go to

dakota.com. Again, I will put that in the show notes. You had a book you said, Gui, that you published? Yes.

GUI COSTIN: Yeah, it's, well it's called Millennials or Not Aliens. It's book one and soon to come out as book two, which is the Dakota Way, which is our four core sales principles.

CONNIE WHITMAN: Will all that be on the website? dakota.com that they could find the books? Love it. Yes. Love the millennials. Say the millennial one again.

GUI COSTIN: Millennials are not aliens. And it's a book on how to sell to that generation, how to think about connecting with that generation.

CONNIE WHITMAN: They're bigger than the baby boomers. So everybody listening, we have to tap into that energy and understand what they're looking for. 'cause it's majorly different than the boomers that came before them. Gui, thank you so much for sharing your zone of genius and keep doing what you're doing. It's, you're, you're doing good things out there and I, I loved meeting you, so thanks for being on.

GUI COSTIN: Love meeting you too. Your energy's infectious. Connie, thank you so much.

CONNIE WHITMAN: Oh, thank you so much. Thanks. And I hope you'll join me. Oh my pleasure. And I hope you'll join me weekly as we question, build and discover no matter where you are in change, whatever that means to your life, career, sales, career, et cetera, or business. I hope my guests and I shared some insight, ideas, and tips for you to take and implement today. Information is a beautiful thing. If you do nothing with it, it's just information sitting in your brain. As soon as

you put it into place and into play and you start working with it, I promise you magic happens on the back end. It's not by accident. You just gotta take the first step forward. So Gui gave you a lot of ideas to implement today. And the other thing is Christmas is coming guys, please buy the books, put 'em in someone's stocking stuffer who is in sales, you can change their life in 2025. We're we're recording in 2024 FYI. So my future people 2025, read the books and make sure you implement the ideas. Gui, thank you again for being on. You've been listening to Enlightenment of Change with me, your host, Connie Whitman on web talk radio.com. I truly am inspired that you follow me and you tune in weekly for my guests and I to have our conversations. And I truly hope that it helps you move the needle on whatever you're trying to create in your job, career, sales, et cetera. I love you all. Have a great week and I'll see you next week. Have a good one, everybody.