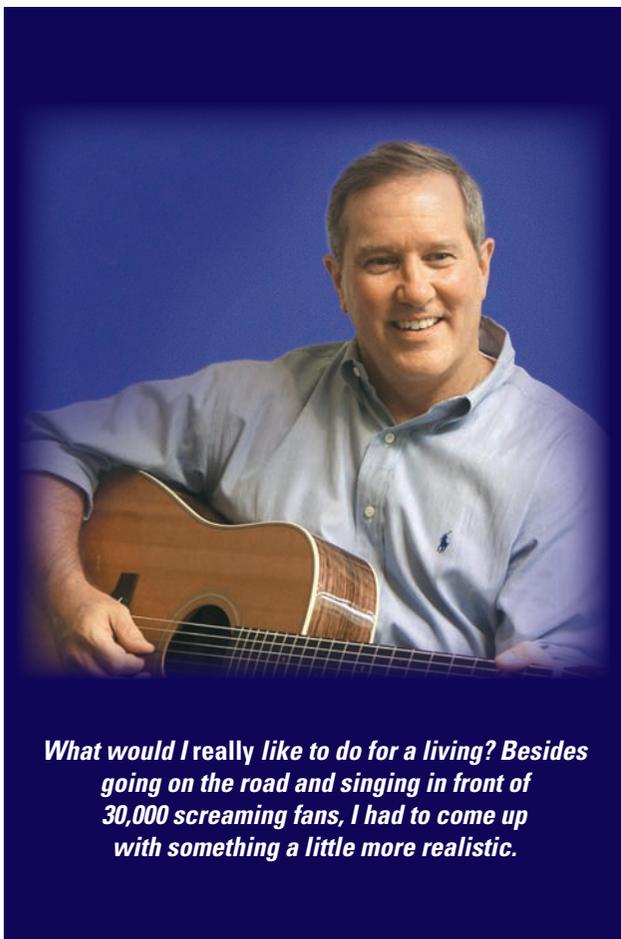


By Carren Bersch, Editor



*What would I really like to do for a living? Besides going on the road and singing in front of 30,000 screaming fans, I had to come up with something a little more realistic.*

## Peter T. Francis

### Professional

President/Founder, Clinical Laboratory Sales Training, LLC, 2007;  
Sales Director, Genomics & Esoteric Testing Specialist,  
Quest Diagnostics;  
Sales Manager, Health Network Laboratories;  
American Medical Labs, Quest Diagnostics;  
SmithKline Beecham Clinical Labs;  
VP, Sales and Marketing, Tektagen.

### Education

BA, Music, Hillsdale College,  
Hillsdale, MI.

### Personal

Singer, composer, recording artist, record producer, music arranger;  
musical instruments: acoustic guitar and piano.  
Authored book on early rock-'n-roll trivia.  
Recorded nine CDs of personal compositions and oldie cover hits.  
Winner, 20th Annual Mid-Atlantic Song Writing Contest, 2003.  
Enjoys spending time with wife, children, and grandchildren.  
Other interests include sport cars and writing.

## CLST founder Peter Francis helps build sales volume

**Master-class reps.** Remarkable sales people, in part, drive remarkable sales results. Clinical Laboratory Sales Training (CLST) has developed more than 60 lab-test and disease subjects and 23 topics related to selling methodologies within the lab industry. Beyond the classroom, the company also provides ride-along encounters with representatives, offering constructive feedback and strategy setting. For labs without a sales manager or with an inexperienced one, this *ad hoc* consultative expertise can be extremely valuable. Our firm amalgamates all necessary components to help develop “master-class” professionals that are head and shoulders above their competition. If lab administration is sincere about marketing lab services, it will always be looking for ways to improve its front-line sales staff. Lab administrators intuitively understand the significance of what a well-trained sales person brings to building business.

**Paragon approach to sales-staff development.** The company’s *modus operandi* is to gain a broad overview of its contacts: what is their competitive environment, how many operating patient service centers do they have, what is their predominant form of billing, what their strengths and weaknesses are, what do they use for connectivity, and on and on — it is important to learn how the lab is positioned within its marketplace. Then we get busy. Some clients request that we alternate monthly training sessions between test topics and sales skills. This is a paragon approach to staff development, as it embodies the essential tools for a master-class marketing representative.

**Create differentiation strategy.** CLST helps its clients by developing a list of basic differences that are unique among their competition. Differentiating is a two-part formula: an intimate knowledge of one’s own lab and that of the competition. The art of differentiating effectively takes significant practice. The company’s experience has shown that many reps either have no idea how their lab is different or, at best, a very superficial idea (“We have a great client service department”). It takes time, patience, and a willingness to “get granular” on both sides of the fence.

**Turn no into yes.** Our sales-training module, “Gaining Interest,” teaches that the rep has less than a couple of minutes to impress — who he is and who he represents and what is in it for the office or individual. Three basic reasons why sales people hear “no” are that the client has 1) no *urgency* to make a change (he is ostensibly happy); 2) no *desire* to make a change (political affiliations or not competitive in certain areas like patient access points, insurance contracts, pricing); and 3) no *trust* or *credibility* with the representative or, possibly, the lab. This last point kills more opportunities than most people realize.

**Building bonds.** Relationship management is a special field, and many field reps fail to recognize the relationship between the lab and client is a two-way street. The lab is dependent on the client for feedback on service levels, the sales numbers, and competitive intelligence. The client is dependent on the lab for expert and courteous phlebotomy, quality results delivered in a timely fashion, quick resolution to problems, and current test and/or method information. Building lasting bonds means focusing on client relationship management (CRM), which — condensed — is *what* you do, *how* you do it, and how *consistently* you do it. Two things matter in a relationship: with whom you have one and how that person regards you. The lab rep must nurture relationships beyond the client’s simple dollar value. The marketing person *must* build trust and credibility with many people inside the customer’s domain, especially the decision maker. In a *good* relationship, both the lab *and* the client will benefit. CRM is as important to preserving and enhancing the intangible asset commonly known as “goodwill” as is the management of hard assets.

**A unique approach.** The purpose of the lab business is to create a customer to produce business results. Achieving results distills down to two basic functions: 1) marketing and 2) innovation — all of the rest are costs. Diagnostic *in vitro* companies take care of the innovation side, but who takes care of the marketing arm of the business? CLST fills that need. It focuses on creating a lab-specific curriculum of sales and test modules with its 35 years of experience and an objective point of view. □