

Special Edition

Developing a Winning Sales Program Part 9

Over the weeks, I've devoted my time in discussing how to develop successful sales people. I've indicated that;

- Successful sales people need to differentiate themselves "from the crowd".
- They need to be creative.
- They need to be effective listeners.
- They can't talk to hear themselves talk;
- They need to probe so they can find out what a customer or prospect is trying to accomplish.

My sales people have been taught to do that.

I further indicated that;

- Sales people need to be goal driven.
- They need to set goals and objectives.
- They need to complete a self, personal review of their selling patterns, and;
- If they're not succeeding, they need to understand there's something fundamentally wrong with them;

I further indicated that your best prospect is an existing customer and I devoted a fair amount of time to explaining how to take an existing customer and expand on that customer. I also further indicated that sales people, need to put their ego's aside and recognize that we all, at some point in time, can use some constructive criticism.

In my articles, I've indicated that self determination and hard work is the magic that makes a all sales people including mine, to be successful;

- If you're lazy – find new employment.
- If you have poor work habits – change them within 30 days.
- Don't blame your failure on others – there is no reason to fail if you are determined enough to succeed.
- Don't blame your failure on the economy- the economy should be a motivation to move ahead.

If sales people would you visit and call enough prospects each day, each week, each month; you would build up your "pipeline" and a full pipeline will bring your sales to a level you've never experienced.

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Consultants Inc.

May 28, 2009

You need to take the fundamentals of everyday life and apply it in your sales process. **We all know that we should floss our teeth everyday because we know that our teeth will be perfect – but we don't.** Eventually, all our teeth will fall out, but we can't see them eroding day by day until it's too late. **The same is true about the fundamentals of sales and sales follow up.** If you don't follow up every day, your sales back log will decay.

In order to be successful, it boils down to self discipline;

- How consistent are you?
- How persistent are you?
- Do you keep your "pipeline" full all the time?
- Do you make enough calls?
- Do you work hard and efficiently?
- Do you set daily goals and objectives?

Last week, I provided some parameters for minimum guidelines that you should achieve;

- I stated that you should make so many new customer calls each week;
- You should make so many customer appointments each week;
- You should make so many new appointments each week, and;
- I further stated that you have to make so many telephone calls each day.
- Each telephone call can make your money or not.

It's also important that you keep a daily sales log. For if you don't refer to what you do each day, your ability to follow up is negligible.

- How many calls, by type, did you make each day?
- Number of follow ups made each day.
- New appointments made each day.
- Appointments seen each day.
- Sales that were made.
- Dollars contracted for.
- Dollars collected.
- Commission dollars earned.

This should be done on a daily basis. You should also develop a contract management program for yourself.

- Do you have a hot prospect list daily?
- Are you doing (and recording) the numbers it takes to make your sales goals a reality?
- How is your sales pipeline?
- How many prospects did you convert into sales?
- How many prospects are you working on? (100+);
- Are you working enough prospects to achieve your sales goals for the next month? If not, your pipeline isn't full!

If you are not performing, you need to go back to the basics as we've discussed throughout these articles.

In many situations, when I train sales people, they need to know what to do; they just don't do it and that gets back to the fundamentals of learning how to work on your own, working smart, and not being lazy and developing good work habits. There is a sales professional named Jeffrey Gitomer that had a quote that should be memorialized by each sales person and it goes something like this; **"In the end....there is only one point of view that matters. There is only one perspective that matters. There is only one perception that matters. The customers!"**

In order to be successful, there are principles that you need to follow and those are:

1. Get a positive attitude and keep it!
2. Set goals and make a commitment to achieve them.
3. Dedicate yourself to mastering the science of selling.
4. Design a networking plan and implement it.
5. Be a leader – not a follower.
6. Get involved in your community.
7. Know your prospect or your prospect's business before you make a sales call.
8. Be memorable in all that you do.
9. Help other people.
10. Stays focused and look for opportunities.
11. Establish long term relationships with everyone, and;

If you look at the most successful sales people (in any field), there's two things that they all have in common and it's that they love what they do and they love to make money. They pursue what they do with a passion and enthusiasm that is contagious. People that don't succeed in sales spend years in the same spot and continue driving in the wrong direction.

It's important that:

- You need to develop a set of skills that puts you into the buyer's pattern, not your selling pattern.
- You can not let your ego get in the way of changing your approach to become successful and achieve a sale.

One of the things that I stress is your ability to earn a living should include utilizing ethics. It's important that you understand that you have to believe that your job is to serve, to facilitate discovery, and to have questions instead of answers. **This seems to go against the reasons you went into sales; the very basic of sales has been the development of strategies in every facet of a sales cycle to give you control.**

One reason people go into sales is because their personality traits fit into their skill set of their profession. Sometimes you do find sellers who are shy, not confident, non verbal, impersonal, lazy, introverted, unable to make decisions, distasteful of activity or socializing, or unwilling to help others. **Sellers are a charming commodity, exuding confidence, taking charge and getting things done** and working whatever hours it takes to accomplish a goal.

However, in some instances, they need to win and be right and need to be in control; which is one of the reasons why they're not reaching their maximum ability.

It's also important, in the sales process, that you develop a code of ethics and you can't compromise those ethics because if you do, then you compromise your company and you compromise your own personal integrity. Ahern established a code of ethics in 1995 and all Ahern sales analysts must abide by these code of ethics. **Ahern's code of ethics are as follows:**

1. Honesty is the best policy – ethical business behavior begins with honest communication.
2. Always tell the truth, even if it means losing a customer. People judge your actions by your integrity.
3. Never over state your ability to perform. Explain, fully, the pro's and con's of utilizing our services.
4. Never use high pressure sales tactics. Ahern offers quality service, but the client must make a valued judgment of our work.
5. Never, never compromise Ahern's integrity.
6. Never, never compromise Ahern's customer's integrity.
7. Never attempt to act as a business broker.
8. Explain fully and honestly Ahern's services and fee structure.
9. Never try to take advantage of a perspective client by trying to over charge because of the situation.
10. Never compromise Ahern's confidentiality with family, friends or business acquaintances.
11. Never compromise Ahern's client confidentiality with other third parties.
12. Never, never disseminate any confidential information to third parties for financial or personal gain.
13. Never make false promises or performance statements to acquire a customer.
14. Never misrepresent Ahern, or yourself, to any client, perspective client, or prospect.
15. Never compromise Ahern's values, integrity and always act professionally and above board.
16. Never violate any codes of conduct as outlined by the National Bureau of Certified Consultants.

My point; we all have to follow a code of ethics, and in some instances, you have to tell the customer the truth – even if it costs you a sale. However, at the end, you will gain respect from that customer.

Throughout my series on sales people, I indicated that there's no sale without a Buyer. People only buy when they can't fill their own needs. In order to be a successful sales person you need to determine what that prospect's needs are and then fulfill those needs.

Once a prospect understands that there is in fact a need for your services, he/she will want some additional information and here's how you can start moving the process along to a conclusion, it's always important to remember the buyer has the answers, the seller has the questions.

In closing, it's always important to remember that service is the goal; discovery is the outcome; a sale may be the solution. A successful sales person has to understand a sales cycle. The cycle takes time because prospects are figuring out how to make sense of the services that you have to offer.

QUOTE OF THE WEEK: “The first great gift we can bestow on others is a good example.”