# Productive Selling News

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## Sales Tip of the Quarter: "Pre-Call Planning/Post-Call Debriefing"

by: John Boyens

I have to constantly remind salespeople that pre-call planning does not count the drive to the appointment or the walk to the prospect's office! It's actually done well in advance of the initial face-to-face call. Our research has shown that the most successful salespeople, regardless of industry, do an outstanding job of pre-call planning. In other words, they do their homework well before they contact their prospects and/or clients. They know that their power on the call is directly related to their prospect knowledge.

Streamline you homework process by using our Pre-Call Planning form to:

- Learn about the key decision makers
- Ascertain their decision making process
- Determine your competitive landscape
- Learn about existing supplier relationships
- Identify what products or services they sell
- Find out if the company is publicly or privately held
- Determine annual revenue
- Ascertain the number of employees
- Find out if this company has been a client of yours in the past
- Discover if any individuals have been a client of yours at a previous company

Use the following sources to do your pre-call preparation:

- Business section of your local newspaper
- Your local Business Journal
- Trade publications
- Industry websites
- Prospect/Client's website
- Business networking sites such as LinkedIn, Plaxo, etc.
- Information database companies such as Craig's List, Dun & Bradstreet, Equifax, Experian, Hoover's, InfoUSA, etc.

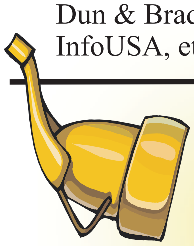
Once you've done your pre-work, answer the following:

- *What needs might the prospect have that match up with my product and/or service offerings?*
- *Based upon my pre-call preparation what am I going to say to open the call?*
- *What references do I have that I can use during the call to show my credibility and expertise?*

Once the meeting/call has been completed I suggest you use our Post-Call Debriefing Process to confirm the following:

- Who are the key decision makers?
- What are their "needs" or "critical business issues"?
- What are the reasons for their "needs"?
- What is the organizational impact?
- What is the financial impact?
- What is their vision of a solution?
- What is our competitive landscape?
- What is the decision making process at their company?
- What is the next step? By Whom? When?

If you can answer the majority of these questions you had a productive sales call. If not, you should view this as a red flag and schedule a follow-up meeting as soon as possible to gather the missing information.



## Spotlighting a Top Performer

We just completed another very successful "open" workshop in Nashville on March 10/11, 2009. There were over twenty attendees representing nine different companies and we're delighted to report that the workshop received a rating of **4.84**. A score of "5" indicates that the workshop was valuable and a score of "1" indicates that the workshop was not valuable. While we received a lot of positive comments after the workshop the tools/processes/concepts that received the most votes were BIO©, VALU Builder©, Credibility WINdow©, the Addressing Sales Objections exercise, the Unique Value Proposition exercise and the Buying Behaviors exercise.

We'd like to spotlight Sherman Hampton, District Sales Manager for Orkin, who had the dubious honor of negotiating with John Boyens at the conclusion of the two-day workshop. Sherman did a great job using our Stand FIRM© Action Plan. In addition, he was able to articulate the cost of delay using our Cost Justification worksheet which allowed him to successfully close the deal. Congratulations to Sherman! Keep up the great work!

Our next two-day, Sales Productivity workshop is scheduled for July 15/16th and our next one-day Sales Management workshop scheduled for May 20th. We hope to see you there!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## Sales Management Tip of the Quarter: "Managing in Tough Times"

by: John Boyens

I have delivered keynote addresses or facilitated workshops at eight conventions so far in 2009 and I must have said the phrase, "*uncertain economic times*" at least 100 times! The world we live in is facing turbulence unprecedented since the 1930s. A global economic slowdown, corporate scandals, collapsing stock prices and conflicts in the Middle East have collided to create a highly volatile macroeconomic cocktail that is affecting businesses both large and small. So what can today's sales and marketing managers do to deliver results in tough economic times? As a manager you have to be able to:

- Demonstrate leadership
  - Lead, don't manage, in a rapidly changing environment
  - Communicate clearly and often to ensure that everyone is marching in the same direction
  - Recognize the need for change and then embrace change
- Improve productivity
  - Invest in the professional development of your team
  - Set clear expectations and don't settle for excuses
  - Inspect what you expect
- Continue to invest in marketing
  - According to the DMA if a company spends the same amount of marketing dollars in 2009 as they did in 2008 they will make seven to nine more impressions than their competition
- Revisit their strategy
  - Answer the following two questions:
    1. "From a sales productivity standpoint what should we start doing, stop doing and continue to do?"
    2. "From our client's perspective what would they say we're doing right, doing wrong and could do better?"
  - If the client says you're doing it right it should align with your continue responses, if they say you're doing it wrong it should align with your stop responses and if they say you could do something better it should align with your start responses.
- Increase your focus
  - Profile your best clients and sell to more that look like them
  - Establish/Refine your vertical market strategy
- Capture low-hanging fruit
  - Ask for referrals
  - Increase your focus on customer retention/up-sell
- Value your employees
  - Create a high performing team by attracting, hiring and motivating the best of the best
  - Catch your people doing something right and then praise them publicly for doing so
  - Make sure that your compensation plan is driving the behavior and delivering the results that you want
- Recognize that our government won't solve our problems
  - Hope is not a strategy!

Now, more than ever, it's important for managers to challenge their company's values to make sure that those values can coexist in their culture. So what are some examples of organizational values that will thrive in tough times? How about:

- Employees are our most important asset
- Accountability is important
- Customers are our lifeblood so we'll make it easy to do business with us
- We will meet our commitments to our customers
- We will behave ethically in all situations
- We will communicate early and often
- We will treat everyone with respect

Please share some of your values with us as well.

# Boyens Group Launches New Website!

The Boyens Group is proud to announce that our new website (designed exclusively for Franchisors and Franchisees) is now "up" and available to visit. For your convenience, the link is www.productivefranchising.com. In addition to our home page and about us pages we have included pages that highlight client testimonials, upcoming events, Webinars, newsletters, a products page and published articles that would be of interest to those in the Franchise space.

As an FYI, this is the website where our new *Insider Program* will be housed by the end of Q 2, 2009. If you're working in Franchising keep visiting the site on a regular basis for updates and don't forget to give us feedback about the site. Contact Cindy Boyens (cindy@boyens.com), our Vice President of Operations, to share your best practices and success stories with us.

Our Boyens Group website (www.boyens.com) will still be available as well but in the future this website will focus on our corporate clients.

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