

Productive Selling News

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Sales Tip of the Quarter: "Referrals = Success"

The majority of businesses in the United States make the majority of their revenue by up-selling existing customers. New business development appears to be a lost "art." I think the reason that most businesses struggle with new business development is because salespeople equate new business development with "cold calling." That's just not the case! New business development becomes much easier if we're given referrals!

So what are the secrets to obtaining referrals? Let me provide the following ten-step roadmap for you to follow:

- Step one is to learn to ask for them. Let your customers know you're open to receiving referrals and what you're looking for.
- Step two would be to market to influencers or connectors. Influencers or connectors are people who have direct contact with your primary prospects and can send them your way.
- Step three would be to weave a web. Research shows that a typical person knows about 250 people. Every time you develop a new business relationship you've potentially increased your personal prospect list by another 250 people!
- Step four would be to make a list. If you're like most salespeople (or small business owners) you've got contact information all over the place...stacks of business cards, address lists in word processing files, customer invoices on a different computer altogether. Take a few hours to compile a list.
- Step five would be to give referrals to get referrals. There is nothing quite like leading by example. Show people how to refer by demonstrating it yourself.
- Step six would be to earn the right to ask for a referral. A referral is a personal thing. You can't expect someone to refer you until they have had some experience with you. They need to understand what you do, how you do it, and what value you bring.
- Step seven would be to figure out what you're going to say. It's important to find the right words to explain exactly how you help prospects. Some people have heard this referred to as an elevator pitch. In other words, what would you say to someone in the time it would take to ride two floors on the elevator?
- Step eight would be to make it easy for them. Don't just ask if they know anyone who might need what you do. Give specifics. I know a financial advisor who wants to work in certain high income neighborhoods. When he meets with his clients he puts a list of 50-75 names in front of them and asks if they know any one on the list. He always comes away with several highly qualified leads.
- Step nine would be to reward all references. Let me give you an example. The owner of a lube, oil and filter franchise offers customers a \$10 certificate toward their next oil change every time they provide him with a referral.
- The last step would be to make generating referrals an expectation of every client relationship. Let your clients know going in that you will do everything within your power to make them happy. By doing so, they should be able to provide you with a glowing recommendation along with referrals.

by: John Boyens

Spotlighting a Top Performer

On March 5/6, 2008 I facilitated another two-day, "Creating a Productive Selling Zone®" workshop in Nashville, Tennessee. At the conclusion of the workshop we received completed feedback forms from twenty-three of the twenty-eight attendees and I'm delighted to report that the workshop received a rating of 4.78. As an FYI, a score of "5" indicates that the workshop was valuable and a score of "1" indicates that the workshop was not valuable. What makes this rating even more exciting is we had such a diverse audience (i.e., salespeople, sales leaders and corporate executives representing fifteen different companies from across the United States). Selected quotes included:

- *"Outstanding! The tools and processes you introduced gave me a much needed boost of confidence!"*
- Thecla McCulloh; Corporate Impressions
- *"Very animated presentation style providing useful, actionable ideas."*
- John Webb; Data Advantage
- *"Powerful and easily digestible sales tools with excellent examples."*
- Mike Manfreda; Yankelovich
- *"I highly recommend this class! John is a great speaker."*
- Tammy Baldwin; Harte-Hanks
- *"John is an outstanding facilitator...extremely knowledgeable."*
- Doug Robinson; Orkin

I'd like to thank Thecla, John, Mike, Tammy and Doug for their kind words and wish all the workshop attendees continued success!

We will be facilitating another "open" workshop in Nashville in July. Please see page two for details.



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Sales Management Tip of the Quarter: "Managing the Outside Sales Rep"

By: John Boyens

If you employ a business model that requires utilizing outside sales reps (for instance...selling blinds, closets, lawn care, janitorial service, signage, computer equipment, telephone systems, etc.) your sales managers must have the skill to **hire, train, and motivate** their outside sales reps. These management skills are "mission critical" to the success of individual salespeople as well as to the overall success of the business!

Most sales managers didn't end up in a management position because they expressed an interest in sales management or demonstrated the skill to be a sales manager. They just happened to be a successful salesperson that was tapped on the shoulder when the management position became available. In the case of the Franchisee, more frequently than not, the owner became the sales manager by default, with no managerial or sales experience at all. That's not a formula for success!

The biggest challenge for the new sales manager is to establish a sales management process with which to lead their team. In order to accomplish this they must learn new skill sets that focus on the individual's and ultimately the team's success.

Ninety-four percent of sales managers we interviewed across the globe make substantially less money their first year as a sales manager than they did their last year as a salesperson. Further, it is harder for them to earn their bonus or commission because they now have to get their entire team to perform to achieve their quota instead of just worrying about themselves. Lastly, they no longer have control of their time because everyone is pulling on them!

Here are some additional "facts" about sales management:

- 90% of management problems are "people" problems

- 90% of "people" problems are communication problems
 - The biggest stumbling block to good communication is poor listening
- Many sales managers promoted from a sales position are asked to manage what used to be a team of their peers
- Most sales managers spend most of their time disciplining the low performer versus coaching the high performer
- Poor hiring is the number one cause of unproductive/inconsistent sales performance and often leads to employee retention issues
- Establishing clear expectations is a must for successful sales management
- Sales managers need to "inspect" what they "expect"
- The sales manager is judged by how well their team performs, not how well they, themselves, perform.

The bottom line is that it takes very specialized skills to enjoy a successful career in sales management. Some of those specialized skills include:

- The ability to manage your salespeople, your customers, your peers, your coworkers, and yes even your boss.
- The ability to quickly assess the talent of ones team and then have the wisdom and courage to make the necessary changes.
- The ability to recruit, hire, motivate and retain high performing sales individuals.
- The ability to establish, execute and inspect a consistent sales and sales management process.
- The ability to coach and train their salespeople versus "sell" for their salespeople.
- The ability to effectively manage time, juggle multiple priorities and put their salesperson's needs first.

Sales Productivity Workshop in Nashville

John Boyens will be facilitating another two-day, Sales Productivity workshop at the exclusive Richland Country Club in Nashville, Tennessee on July 22/23, 2008. This highly interactive workshop will include sales and sales management "best practices" from over 15,000 salespeople from a variety of industries across the globe, over 15 years of buyer-based research data as well as small group breakout sessions and role plays to ensure that each attendee will walk away with tips/techniques that will positively impact their business the very next day. Key topics will include:



- The four reasons why people don't buy
- Selling value versus price
- Differentiating your company from your competition
- Engaging decision makers earlier in the sales process
- Selling solutions versus selling products

As usual, seating will be limited to 25 workshop attendees to ensure an optimal learning ratio. The investment is \$750/person which includes registration for the two-day workshop, all workshop materials, continental breakfast and a catered lunch both days. We will continue to offer quantity discounts if four or more people attend from the same company. Don't miss this opportunity to invest in your professional development to make 2008 your most productive selling year ever!