

Productive Selling News

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Sales Tip of the Quarter: "Selling in a Tough Economy"

by: John Boyens

We are living in uncertain economic times to say the least! That being said, what can salespeople do to ensure success? Here are five "tried and true" Sales Productivity tips that could make 2009 your best selling year ever:

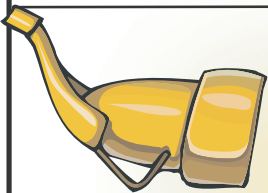
1. Profile Your "Best" Customers and then Target Similar Prospects: The most successful salespeople profile their existing customer base to determine specific characteristics of their "best" customers (i.e., SIC code, annual revenue, number of employees, locations, etc.). Imagine if you found out that your best customers are in the healthcare industry, with revenues of \$50 million dollars or more, employing a minimum of 100 people, with offices located throughout the southeastern part of the United States. Wouldn't it be quite easy to find other healthcare companies that "fit" that profile?

2. Always ask for Referrals: Now more than ever it is imperative to ask for referrals! Every time someone closes a sale they should ask for a referral. Every time that they're turned down for a sale they should ask for a referral. Every time that they satisfactorily resolve a customer problem or complaint they should ask for a referral. Another opportunity for referrals is to join a local or regional networking group. The sole purpose of networking groups is to enable salespeople to share leads with member businesses that don't directly compete with theirs. Other networking opportunities include joining a local Chamber of Commerce or joining a trade association.

3. Schedule Time for Prospecting/New Business Development Activities Every Day: Salespeople should schedule a minimum of one-hour per day dedicated to prospecting or new business development activities. That time can be spent generating referrals, attending a trade show, attending chamber events or business mixers, by joining a local networking group or by scouring the business section of their local newspaper or business journal.

4. Employ a Proactive Cross-Sell Strategy: Once you've profiled your existing customer base you should be able to identify other departments or subsidiaries that could purchase your products or services. Ask for a "warm" introduction from your existing customer to their counterparts. Create a cross-sell pipeline in addition to your new business pipeline to increase your cross-sell productivity and success.

5. Sell Bigger Deals: If you want to make more money and achieve better results it only makes sense to target bigger prospects. When they captured the famous bank robber Willie Sutton they asked him why he robbed banks. His answer was, "That's where the money is!" The same thing is true in sales. Bigger companies usually place bigger orders. Create a target opportunity "hit list" of five opportunities that could close within the next three to six months. Then actively work that list and watch your production soar!



Spotlighting a Top Performer

Recently we received an email from Ben Purich, an Account Executive with Onvia, Inc. in Seattle. Ben was a participant in one of our Sales Productivity Webinars and used several of our tools, processes and concepts from the Webinar to great success! Here's an excerpt from his email:

*"I contacted a client who was a risk-averse buyer who had been pushing me off for weeks and used three distinct methods you taught us yesterday during the Webinar. The first was to use your **Buying Behaviors Grid** to create a sense of urgency by simply asking him how he could afford not to do this as many opportunities had already come and gone during our phone tag time. The second was after getting him to come around and agree that he really couldn't afford to wait he still wanted to hold for another two weeks. So I used your **Stand FIRM**® **Action Plan** outline and asked him what would change in the next two weeks that would influence him to pull the trigger and after a moment he conceded that he really didn't have to wait. Lastly, I used your **Internal Cost Justification worksheet** to present the investment scenario and in less than three minutes he agreed to move forward. All this suffice to say he is now a client of Onvia. I can't thank you enough!*

Congratulations to Ben, Mike Tannourji and the entire Onvia team! Keep up the great work!

Sales Management Tip of the Quarter: "The Principles of Leadership"

By: John Boyens

The US Army identified eleven principles of leadership that I think are very applicable today's sales managers and management in general. They are:

Know yourself and seek self-improvement - In order to know yourself, you have to understand your primary, secondary and developing management styles. In addition, you need to assess your management flexibility (how easy you navigate the different styles) and your management effectiveness (how often you choose the right style for the situation).

Be technically proficient - As a leader, you must know your job and have a solid familiarity with your employees' tasks.

Seek responsibility and take responsibility for your actions - Search for ways to guide your organization to new heights. And when things go wrong (they always do sooner or later) do not blame others. Analyze the situation, take corrective action, and move on to the next challenge.

Make sound and timely decisions - Use good problem solving, decision making, and planning tools.

Set the example - Be a good role model for your employees. They must not only hear what they are expected to do, but also see.

Know your people and look out for their well-being - Know your employees as people and demonstrate your care for your co-workers.

Keep your workers informed - Know how to communicate with not only them, but also your peers, your superior and other key people.

Develop a sense of responsibility in your workers - Help to develop good character traits that will help them carry out their professional responsibilities.

Ensure that tasks are understood, supervised, and accomplished - Communication is the key to this responsibility.

Train as a team - Although many so called leaders call their organization, department, section, etc. a team; they are not really teams...they are just a group of individuals doing their jobs.

Use the full capabilities of your organization - By developing a team spirit, you will be able to employ your organization, department, section, etc. to its fullest capabilities.

Abraham Lincoln has been called by many historians one of our greatest leaders. His leadership concepts included:

- Get Out of the Office and Circulate Among the Troops
- Persuade Rather than Coerce
- Lead by Being Led
- Keep Searching Until You Find your "Grant"

What do those bullets mean for today's manager? They mean manage by walking around (be visible to your team), use your words versus your title to lead, show that you're willing to learn from others and most importantly hire people that can take your job!

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 March 10/11, 2009. 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 2009 your most productive selling year ever!

Hold these dates:

May 20, 2009
Management Effectiveness workshop
Nashville, TN

July 15/16, 2009
Sales Productivity workshop
Nashville, TN

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