



Southern Building Material Association's Sales Management Newsletter

October 2011

"Learning Moments Are Great opportunities, Do Not Miss Them."

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The customer knows your delivery is the best in the industry.

Sometimes You Have to Give Your Two Cents Worth - Even To Your Best Customers

By: Mike Hourigan

Selling to existing customers who are also "friends" can present a unique set of selling circumstances. Here is an example of one of those "friendly" situations and how you can handle it.

An existing customer comes to you with an offer because you have such a good relationship with them. They have received a quotation from your competitor and it is two cents lower per unit than your offering. Because you are such a good friend, they will let you have their business if you meet the price. You have done business with them for years and consider them a friend as well. Because the client orders only once a year, there is pressure not to lose the order.

The customer knows your delivery is the best in the industry. They know you have never let them down before, and you have never sold them an inferior product. His receiving manager has a good relationship with your shipping agent. As a matter of fact, they praise you for great delivery and service all the time. They have dealt with other vendors before and know the consequences of lousy service.

So what should you do? Should you take the order and put it on the slow truck, mix up the order, or ship it to the wrong address? Or give them the thrill of their life and ship at the last possible minute? Of course not! But it is hard not to take an issue like this personally, as you have done business with them for years and now they want to nickel and dime you under the guise of friendship.

Things to consider:

- Did your friend and client actually get a quote?
- Is the other vendor quoting what the customer actually needs?
- Does the client really need your delivery and service?
- How important is your friendship to the client?

For the sake of argument, let's say the client really is a friend, needs your delivery, and is willing to show you a legitimate quote. What should you do or say first?

First, do the math and monetize the entire purchase. If they are purchasing 1,000 units, the two cent difference is \$20.00; at 10,000 units the difference is \$200.00, if it is 100,000 units the difference is \$2,000.00. Now you can talk in terms of the difference only.

Second, say, "So what you want the most (good service), is what you do not want to pay for, is that correct?"

Third, couple the math and the friendship into a question that will make them realize

how silly their request really is. Let's say they want to purchase 10,000 units and the difference is only \$200... "Do you really want to jeopardize a yearly purchase for only \$200?" Let's say the difference is \$2,000... "You mean to tell me that my friendship is not worth two cents?" Or, you could offer to meet the competition's price for product and only charge them an additional two cents per unit for your delivery.

In many cases it is as simple as presenting your argument from a "friendly perspective."

So, the next time someone gives you an opportunity to meet a price because you are a friend, do the math and see how much your friendship is really worth.

Mike Hourigan is a consultant, author, and Gitomer Certified Speaker who helps organizations achieve better results through their people. He specializes in sales, sales management, change management, and helping organizations create their silent sales force. To book Mike for your next event, visit www.GitomerCertified.com or contact the friendly folks at Buy Gitomer via email or by calling 704-333-1112.



*Love What You Sell/Believe in
What You Do.*



*Take responsibility for when
things don't work out and
praise others for when they do.*

Step Plan to Help Good Salespeople Become Great

by Michael Pedone

Sales Question:

"I've have over 7 years of sales experience (not all with the same company) but have yet to reach that "Top Sales Rep" status based on my numbers... What do I need to do?"

Everyone "wants" to be considered one of the best but only a few are willing to do what it takes to get there. If you're one of the few with a deep desire to be in that top 10% category here's a five step plan that can help separate yourself from the rest of the pack.

5-Step Plan to Help Good Salespeople Become Great

1. Love What You Sell/Believe in What You Do

This does not mean "trick" or "fool" yourself into loving what you sell/do. It means take a real hard look at yourself and be honest... is what you are doing/selling right now where you are supposed to be?

If the answer is "No" then the odds of you reaching the top are slim. And even if you do, so what? You still won't be happy.

A house divided against itself cannot stand. Loving what you do and peak performance/results go hand-in-hand.

Sometimes the first step to becoming a top salesperson is having the wisdom to admit you're in the wrong place and the courage to make a change.

2. Accountability

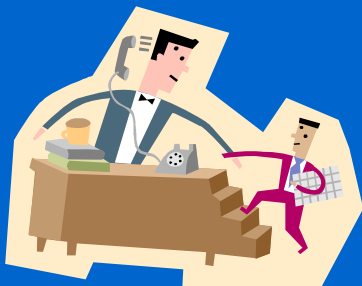
Hold yourself accountable for your success.

Take responsibility for when things don't work out and praise others for when they do. Just because the economy is bad doesn't mean you can't make more money than you ever have before. Who says you can't have your best year ever?

Too many potentially great salespeople sabotage their chances by placing limits on



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themselves and blaming outside forces.

Currently, the "economy" is the reason for poor results. When the economy is back on its feet, it will be that the "leads are bad" or "our competitors have a better product/service/pricing" etc.

Realize that you alone are responsible for your own success and there is enough business to go around for you and your competition.

3. Find a Mentor

Now that you're in the right spot (or confirmed you were in the right place to begin with) and have committed to holding yourself accountable and responsible for your own success (or failures), the next step is to find a mentor who is willing to take you under his/her wing.

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They were usually top salespeople at the company I was working for at the time, or a VP of Sales or even the CEO. I would seek out those who had already achieved what I was after and asked for their advice. Don't be afraid to ask for help. Successful people like to share their knowledge with those who want to be successful. What they don't want to do is waste their time with those who only "say" they want to be successful.

4. Do What Others Won't

Get to work early, listen to motivational tapes on the way to work, role-play in the morning, read sales books, jump at the chance to go to sales seminars and/or attend sales webinars that your company is willing to pay for - and be willing to pay for them out of your own pocket if they won't.

There's a reason why the top salesperson category is a small group. The majority isn't willing to do what the few are willing to do.

If you are going to run the race, run through the tape rather than give up 90% of the way.

5. Become a Mentor

Share what you've learned. Not only does it keep the cycle going for the next generation but it also helps you stay sharp.

The 20 Worst Prospecting Voicemail Mistakes Salespeople Make

by Kendra Lee

Among salespeople who make prospecting calls, there's a hot debate about whether or not you should leave a voicemail message.

I'm of the opinion that you definitely should - but only once every three days.

For a voicemail to have any impact, however, you have to avoid the common blunders... and many of them are easy to make.



For a voicemail to have any impact, however, you have to avoid the common blunders... and many of them are easy to make.

During one of these hot debates, I asked our followers which are the worst voicemail mistakes you can make in prospecting. Here are their top 20.

1. Not leaving one so your prospect doesn't have the chance to return your call.
2. Pretending you have called when you haven't.
3. Not having planned what you want to talk about in advance.
4. Talking about your products, instead of things that matter to your prospect.
5. Speaking for more than 20 or 30 seconds without letting the prospect say *anything*.
6. Leaving a message that's too short and doesn't give your prospect a compelling reason to call you back.
7. Not showing that you have researched your prospect, and his or her situation, in your voicemail message.
8. Speaking so quickly that you can't be heard. Or worse, mumbling.
9. Leaving a voicemail with lots of verbal pauses (like "ums" and "ahs") that make you sound less confident, and less credible.
10. Leaving a message and then passively waiting for a call back, instead of continuing to try to reach the prospect.
11. Not leaving your name and contact information at the end of the message. Better yet, leave it at the beginning when the prospect is poised to take notes.
12. Sounding too "canned" or "salesy" to catch your prospect's attention.
13. Not mentioning your company's web site, if it's your strongest sales tool.
14. Using a tone of voice that suggests you don't expect a call back.
15. Not following up via other means, like email or handwritten note.
16. Giving up too soon, when most prospects won't return your call until you have tried them more than nine times.
17. Not mentioning another company you have helped with a similar problem that the prospect is likely to have.
18. Failing to stick to one topic per voicemail message.
19. Not verifying that you have the right contact before leaving multiple messages.
20. Forgetting to mention a common colleague or someone who has referred you.

Combating the Economy Blues

by Craig James

Hardly a day goes by these days when we're not bombarded with bad news. The stock market goes down. Unemployment goes up. Through it all, there's one thing that's not changing - your quota. And your company's expectation that you meet or exceed it.

To say these are difficult times would be the understatement of the decade.

Closer to home, prospects are taking longer to make decisions - if they're making them at all. They're inviting more vendors in and expecting them to sharpen their pencils. And they're making you use those pencils to justify their investment in hard dollars, and fast paybacks.

In such an environment, it's human nature to feel discouraged and helpless - not to mention stressed. It's understandable that we might feel as if we're climbing up an endlessly high mountain. That we're banging our heads against a wall. And to use these obstacles as reasons to mail it in, ride it out, and wait for better times.

Well, you know what? That's the attitude of the majority of sales people - including those at your competitors, and maybe even in your own office.

And therein lies the silver lining surrounding these dark, ominous clouds: you are part of the minority who refuse to throw in the towel, who refuse to use the lousy economy as an excuse not to succeed, and who refuse to let external influences dictate how you will approach your job. No, you're determined to not just tread water, you're determined to take business away from the majority who prefer to complain about how tough it is



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out there. And you have the skills - relationship-building and selling - to do so.

ACTION ITEMS

These days, prospects have become more cautious when it comes to switching providers. It's therefore even more incumbent on you to continue to establish and cultivate relationships - trusted advisor relationships.

Don't attempt to sell; instead, demonstrate how you can help solve a problem (conserving cash, increasing revenue, or removing a headache, for example). Redouble your efforts and focus your time on activities that will get more opportunities into your funnel, and more qualified opportunities into your pipeline.

Continue to sell smart by using what you've learned in sales training, and tips you've picked up from workshops. Above all, don't let all the gloom and doom you hear get you down. Maintain a positive, optimistic attitude, particularly when you're with prospects. In short, do what the majority of sales people aren't - waiting for better times. Get to work right now. Because even now, as Alec Baldwin said in *Glengarry Glen Ross*: "They're sitting out there waiting to give you their money. Are you going to take it?"

4 Keys to Managing Social Media Use at Work

by Kevin Eikenberry

Top 12 Words of Warning in... Whether it is Facebook, Twitter, You Tube, instant messaging on the computer, or any of those, plus texting, many managers wonder what they can do, what they should do, to curb or manage the amount of time people are spending, at work, on these activities.

Since many leaders are facing these questions, and I've been asked my opinion more often in the last few months than ever, I thought I would share my thoughts. Consider these four steps as a way to structure your thinking about this question as a way to come to your own conclusion.

First, the policy. What is your company's policy about access or use of these sites and services at work? If you work in a larger organization, perhaps there is a policy you are unaware of. This is the logical starting place, and if a policy or guideline is in place, it may make this process much easier!

After policy, expectations. If there is a policy, perhaps your team members are unaware of it. (Heck, you might have been unaware of it until you checked into it!) Spend time with your team explaining the policy if it exists, answering questions to make it clear. If no policy exists, have a conversation about your expectations of people's use of time (including the use of these interactive tools). Notice I said to have a conversation - include everyone in the dialogue about the use of these tools and what success looks like at work - rather than just telling them what you expect. It is difficult to reprimand or challenge people's use until they know what is expected of them.

Check your assumptions. Is it possible that some or all of the activity you see could be work related? After all there are thousands of Facebook pages for business, and millions of educational YouTube videos. Of course, if you see someone posting a picture of their grandchild (yes, another assumption is the age of the folks who might be using social media during working hours), that likely isn't business related... unless it is deepening a relationship with a Client or vendor. Check your assumptions - I'm sure you know the trouble assuming can get us into.

Results, not style, make the difference. Perhaps your issue about use of social media at work is exactly that - your issue. Are people meeting their job expectations? Are they getting their work done on time at the appropriate level of quality? After all, isn't it productivity that you are concerned about if you are thinking about social media use? If they are "doing their job" at an acceptable level, perhaps it is time to stretch them. Maybe what you are labeling in your mind as "messing around" or "wasting time" is a hint that people need more, or more challenging, work.