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6 Powerful Prospecting Tips

By John Boe

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Sales is a contact sport and prospecting for new business is the name of the game! You will never meet a salesperson that failed because they had too many prospects to talk to. For the majority of salespeople, finding new customers is without a doubt the most difficult and stressful aspect of the profession. Prospecting should be viewed more as a mindset rather than merely as an activity. It is something you need to be constantly aware of because you never know where your next prospect will be coming from. It really doesn't matter how competent you are or how well you know your product line, if you don't have a qualified prospect in front of you, you don't have a sale.

1. Prospecting for new business is similar to working out. You know it is good for you and it will produce positive results if you do it routinely. Professional salespeople prospect daily. It is important to block-off specific time on your calendar for prospecting activities such as phone calling and emailing. Treat your prospecting time with the same respect as you would any other important appointment, otherwise, there is a tendency that it will slip through the cracks. This is not the time to check your emails, play solitaire on the computer, make a personal phone call or chat with your associates. Stay focused and take your prospecting seriously. Set the tone by closing your office door and have your incoming calls held unless it is a call from a client or a prospect.

2. Be prepared, get organized and take good notes. It is critical to have a computerized contact system to record remarks and suspense future contacts or appointments.

3. Use a script – don't shoot from the hip. There is only one thing worse than listening to a salesperson read a script over the phone and that is to listen to a salesperson without a script. Obviously, it is important to not only have a script but to practice it until it sounds smooth and natural. Set aside time to role-play with an associate over the phone. By taking turns presenting and critiquing you will gain confidence, polish your script and be more effective. When prospecting, avoid the temptation to sell over the phone. Your objective is to gather information and make the appointment.

4. Strike while the iron is hot! When working with a new prospect, it is important to make contact quickly. Prospects are perishable. No matter how interested a prospect may appear, don't wait for

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them to call you. You are only one of many competing interests for your prospect's time and money.

5. Keep the high ground and avoid the temptation to badmouth your competition. While it is fair to make head-to-head comparisons, you should avoid personal attacks. Attacking your competition makes you look unprofessional and petty. Emphasize the benefits of your product or service by guiding your prospect through a comparison of quality and price. Play to your strengths and not the weakness of your competition. Let your prospect draw their own conclusions from a well-presented comparison.

6. Rejection is a natural aspect of the sales process so don't take it personally. Learn from rejection, use it as a feedback mechanism and look for ways to improve your presentation. Salespeople who take rejection personally lack perseverance and seldom make the sale. Sales is a numbers game pure and simple. As a professional baseball player, if you can average four hits out of ten times at bat you

are heading for the Hall of Fame. Research indicates that in sales you can expect your prospect to say no five times before they buy. With this in mind, realize that with every sales rejection you receive, you are one step closer to making the sale!

John Boe, based in Monterey, CA, is recognized as one of the nation's top sales trainers and motivational speakers. He helps companies recruit, train and motivate quality people. John is a leading authority on body language and temperament styles. To view his online Video Demo or to have John Boe speak at your next event, visit <http://www.johnboe.com> or call (831) 375-3668.

The Danger of Success©

By Bill Truax

Keep Your Prospecting Muscles in Shape!

The other day I was visiting with one of my neighbors for the first time in a couple of years. We live in an area where we wave to each other a lot, but don't seem to talk much. As the conversation continued we started talking about how our respective companies were doing. He owns a chemical blending company with about 50 employees that is doing quite well.

I explained that our sales consulting and training business was doing pretty well also, and then he asked me the universal question I always seem to get. Do you know of anyone who is a good sales manager I can hire?

It seems as if a lot of smaller companies need a good sales manager. I wish we could manufacture sales managers, we would make a fortune.

As we talked further he said that he was looking for someone who can expand their markets and grow their business with new customers. That of course set off an alarm in my brain, because that means Prospecting.

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At this point I mentioned that what he needs is not so much a sales manager as someone who can prospect effectively. He chuckled slightly said I was right and then said "I have forgotten how to Prospect."

Now here is a man who started this company himself. At the beginning he was the head of production, operations, and sales. He did everything including prospecting so well that the business has grown to where it is today in just about 12 years. Yet he claims to have forgotten how to Prospect.

My response was that he probably hasn't forgotten how, his prospecting skills have simply atrophied. He agreed.

One of the biggest problems all of us face is the danger of success. We go out, grow a territory or market with hard work and lots of Prospecting. Then as we are reaping the benefits of all that effort we begin to discontinue the very things that brought us that success.

And the first thing virtually all sales people stop doing is Prospecting. Primarily because it is the one aspect of sales that exposes us to the most amount of rejection. Yet it is also the one area that can bring us the most reward. So the "risk" to Prospecting is matched and often surpassed by the "rewards." That is a great risks to reward ration – sure beats the lottery.

So how do we maintain a balance in our sales lives? Good question. With our BLITZ CALL® System for prospecting, for example, we suggest that you decide on a specific number of prospecting calls to make per week . Then simply make that number. We emphasize that you should not be concerned about what happens on each call. But you must make that number of calls.

We suggest you decide how many Prospecting calls to make, by using our method of Statistical "Prospecting" Control (S"P"C). Here is how to do just that.

- First, decide how many new customers you want in the next 12 months.
- Second, determine how many people you have to call on right now to get that number of new customers taking into account your sales skills, product line, markets, and so on.
- Finally, take that number and divide it by 40. 40 is the number of weeks most sales people are actually selling in a year.

The answer is the number of calls you need to make per week.

For example, let's say I want 40 new customers this year and my current closing rate is 20%, that is for every new customer I have to call on 5 Prospects. So in order to get 40 new customers, I will need to get 200 new Prospects.

Divide 200 by 40 and that tells me I have to make 5 Prospecting calls a week. Now that is pretty easy for any field sales professional.

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Pretty simple. If you do this you won't have the up and down cycles so many people run into in sales. Keeping a constant flow of new prospects in your pipeline makes life a lot easier. Also, as you get better and better at Prospecting, you will have to make fewer and fewer Prospecting calls.

When you have an effective prospecting skill, don't let it atrophy simply because your business grows and you don't want to Prospect any more – times change. Now you know how to keep your prospecting muscles in shape

Sell Well and Often

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Bill Truax is a Sales Management and Field Operations Consultant living in Cleveland, Oh. He conducts Sales Team Assessments, conducts Management and Leadership development programs, and works with Field Sales Professionals both in the field and in workshops. He has written 3 books and recorded 2 CD's on Prospecting and Making Cold Calls and conducts a variety of skill based seminars, workshops, and train the trainer programs. Visit his website at



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