

11 THINGS TO MAKE MORE SALES

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Lesson # 1

In today's current marketing environment many small businesses and entrepreneurs are looking for simple and effective ways to increase sales. Small businesses and privately owned companies are doing better in today's marketplace than their larger competitors, simply because they're becoming more innovative with their sales process.

I'm going to go over a quick ways that will help you start making more sales for your business. While you may be familiar with some of these methods already they are all solid and effective techniques that you can use to increase your sales.

- Do your best to gain trust

While, price and product benefits are obvious buying factors, the less obvious ones are intuition, impressions, and rapport. It's important to keep in mind that prospects are just as apt to buy for emotional reasons as for practical ones, so do your best to show them that you're sincere, honest and that you honor your business arrangement. Never make a promise to a new prospect and then break it.

- Define your unique position

If your product or service provides your customer with specific benefits do your best to make sure that they are better than your nearest competition. Make sure you express to them what makes your company stand out and why they should choose your business over someone else.

- Always listen to your customer

When it comes to selling most people are guilty "overselling", and miss out on closing the sale. It's important to listen to your prospect as they answer questions, be aware of their tone and pay close attention to their body language (if meeting in person). If you take the time to listen to your customer you can uncover their problem, provide them with a solution and close the sale.

- Make your presentation sparkle

Never take your sales presentation granted. Before meeting with a potential client make sure you practice your pitch. After all you've spent a lot of money perfecting your product or service, so why not take the time to develop a polished and effective presentation. This includes your phone pitch.

Lesson # 2

Setting Realistic Sales Goals

In the last lesson we talked about effective ways to increase sales. In this lesson we are going to talk about setting realistic sales goals.

Oh that wonderful feeling when we close the sale. There's nothing like it fills us with a sense of accomplishment and achievement which motivates us to sell even more.

If you've ever been in a situation where you have been given unobtainable goals from a supervisor or manager's, then you know there is nothing worse than being unable to reach your goals and make your quota. The results are the same whether you work for someone else or you work for yourself. You're left with a feeling of despair that leads to lack of morale and even lower sales figures across the board.

FACT: Unrealistic goals lead to less sales and lower revenue.

It's important to keep in mind that when you're setting your sales goals for the year or month. You don't set your expectations too high. While you want to achieve maximum results being realistic, not low goals, is the key to your overall success.

You want to put in place, a plan that will allow you reach your projected goals at a steady pace without putting unnecessary strain on yourself and your sales team. This is important simply because success is a great motivator. If you start out with small, obtainable goals you will find then you and your team will be more motivated to reach higher. On the other hand if you set unrealistic or unattainable goals you and your team will less motivated and reluctant to move forward.

Here is a simple but SMART formula for setting realistic and attainable sales goals. This formula is referred to as SMART because it stands for:

Specific
Measurable
Attainable
Realistic
Timely

This simple sales yet catchy acronym has been around for many years and has helped many companies and business owners to come up with effective sales plans that are realistic enough to be achieved in a timely manner.

- Specific stands for setting goals that are well-defined and focused.
- Measurable stands for the criteria needed for measuring progress
- Attainable stands for the importance of setting realistic goals.
- Realistic stands for the importance of choosing goals that matter.
- Timely stands for giving your goals a target end date.

It's important to be specific when it comes to what you want to accomplish. When it comes to setting realistic goals the key to making it work, is taking your time on each step and being completely realistic. Don't forget to include a solid plan for putting them into action, and for measuring them to see if they are being reached.

Lesson # 3

How to Relax Your Customer and Close the Sale

In the last lesson we talked about setting realistic sales goals. In this lesson we are going to talk about how to relax your customer and close the sale.

Relaxing your customer is important to any type of sales situation you may find yourself in. It's a good idea to think of the customer as a guest in your home, you are the host, so you want to make them as comfortable as possible. The more comfortable they are the easier it will be for them to talk to you.

If you've been in sales for any length of time I'm sure you are well aware that trying to persuade someone you've never met before to buy your product or service can be extremely challenging to say the least.

While the challenges are many, the main reason is because most consumers have a general fear associated with sales people. The fear that we are all alike, comparing us to the unfair stereotype of the used car salesman. They are afraid of being convinced to buy something they don't need at a price they can't afford.

When it comes to acquiring a new customer and closing the sale an off topic conversation is a great icebreaker. While we all want to make that initial sale the ultimate goal should be to obtain a lifetime customer and achieve repeat sales. So don't be afraid to take a little time to get to know your customer better. Try to find a common denominator that you can both relate to, something unrelated to the product or service you are trying to sell them.

This is easier than you may think; people love to talk, especially about themselves. Ask questions their families their pets, and their hobbies. Especially if pertains to your product.

When it comes to attracting new customers it's important to always be prepared. You never know where you might obtain a new customer. Did you know that most customer acquisition happens outside of the workplace? Not only at business and networking functions, but at your local grocery store, sporting events and restaurants.

Here is a quick example, say you're in the pet food aisle at your local grocery store, this is a good place to talk to people, because people love to talk about their pets. A simple question such as; "What kind of dog do you have?" will get them talking.

The junk food aisle is also a good place to talk to people. For some reason the presence of candy and junk food puts people in a good mood, and they are more prone to talk with a stranger. This can open the door to further communication and may eventually lead to acquiring them as a customer.

Now, I'm not saying that you should start stalking the isles of your favorite super market. I'm just saying that you should always be prepared because you never know where an opportunity may present itself. The simple fact is that most people love to talk as long as they can relate to the topic of conversation, so don't be afraid to ask questions, and get to know your customer beyond that of the products they need.

The more relaxed you can make your customer in a comfortable setting, the better off you both will be, and the more sales you will make.

Lesson # 4

Following Up With a Lead Before it Cools Off

In the last lesson we talked about how to relax your customer and make the sale. In this issue we are going to talk about following up with a lead before it cools off.

Anyone that works in sales knows just how important it is to have lead sources to keep their sales funnel full. But it's not just about how we obtain the leads that is important, it's what we do with them once we have them.

In sales terms, the longer a sales lead goes without receiving a response, the colder it becomes. Not following up with the lead immediately after it's received is one of the biggest mistakes that anyone in sales can make.

There are many reasons why a lead can go cold. For instance; they could have gone someplace else to find what they need. They could have been contacted by another business or purchased from a competitor. Or they could have changed their mind completely.

When it comes to making sales it doesn't particularly matter what you're selling, but it is extremely important that you get know who you are selling it to. That is why it is vital that you follow-up with any new lead you receive as soon as possible. Remember, as we discussed in your last lesson you want to make your 'new' potential customer feel relaxed and at ease from the very start, not getting back to them quickly will no doubt get you started off on the wrong foot.

That old term "strike while the iron is hot" still holds true. In fact the faster you can respond to a new potential customer the better. It is important that you make contact with them and start building a relationship while they are still interested in what you have to offer.

Another common mistake I have witnessed, is contacting a new lead immediately, but having absolutely no enthusiasm once you contact them. When you call a potential customer, smile as you speak to them (even on the phone), the customer will pick up on the inflection in your voice and respond to it. Don't act as though they are any inconvenience or burden to you. Make time for them and remember to treat them just like they are a new friend you are excited to speak with.

Remember, you are the expert when it comes to your product, don't expect your customer to know everything, if they did, they wouldn't need you. So make sure they know that you are happy to help them.

Another no-no when following up on a lead is to yawn, sneeze, or cough into the receiver of the phone. I understand that these are normal and common bodily functions, but there is no excuse for doing it directly into the receiver, this is a great way to lose the sale, the yawn alone will most likely make the customer to find any excuse to hang up the phone.

Always put yourself in the shoes of the customer. Imagine meeting someone for the first time over the telephone and your conversation is being interrupted by yawns, and sneezes, I doubt you would be gung-ho about doing business with them.

Following up with a lead and then putting them on hold is another common mistake. Although your reasons for putting your them on hold may seem very important to you, your customer will find it to be annoying regardless of your reasons. So be sure to set aside a time to call your new lead when you know there will be enough time to speak without interruption.

Keep in mind, the next time you receive a lead, act on it immediately, let your customer know that you are happy to work with them, speak clearly and avoid interruptions, and watch your sales productivity increase!

Lesson # 5

Using Testimonials to Make More Sales

In the last lesson we talked about following up with a lead before it cools off. In this lesson we are going to talk about using testimonials to make more sales.

If you've ever have made a purchase from QVC, HSN, or watched an infomercial on TV then I'm sure you're aware of the power of testimonies. You see, they know the secret. They know that by harnessing the power of customer testimony they can increase their sales substantially without spending additional funds on advertising.

Seeing the testimonies of others helps potential customers imagine what it would be like to own the product or take advantage of the service that you offer. When a person goes

shopping for a particular product and service one of the first things they take into consideration is the opinion of others.

They will take the advice of family, friends, strangers and even testimonies on webpages. They do this because they want to make an informed choice. The testimonies help them picture what it would be like to experience the same benefits as the person who shared the testimony with them.

One of the best ways to get perspective new customers to purchase from you is to introduce them to other satisfied customers and since you can't take your current (happy) customers to every business meeting or sales call you go to it is important to collect their testimony to share with your new prospects.

While this is a fairly easy step to take many business professionals take it for granted and the cold hard facts are that they are leaving money on the table!

The process is simple, all you have to do is ask your best customers if you can interview them about the positive experience they've had with your product or service. You either take their written testimonial, or if they'll allow it, recorded it with an audio recorder or even a video. Be sure to inform them how you're going to use the information so they can be at ease knowing that you're going to be using their words and images in front of perspective customers.

Once you have several testimonials you can present them in printed or digital format. Creating a digital presentation is as easy as plugging your customer's audio or video testimony into a PowerPoint presentation that you can playback on your laptop to prospective customers or email to them.

Ask your best customers to talk about the benefits they receive from using your product or service. Try to collect several different testimonials relating to different aspects of your business, products or services. This way you can use the one that best fits the new customer you are working with.

Another good tip is to show pictures of customers using your product or service. Combine a glowing testimonial with a picture of a happy satisfied customers and it will be worth more than a thousand high color brochures, not to mention a lot less expensive!

Remember, nothing sells better than truth and you can't get closer to the truth than when it comes from someone who's had a real life experience with you, your product, your services, and your company.

Lesson # 6

Taking Full Advantage of Every New Lead That You Receive

In the last lesson we talked about using testimonials to make more sales. In this lesson we are going to talk more about taking full advantage of every new lead that you receive.

As we have discussed before, every day in business is critical and every potential sale is important. It's important to remember that the lead you receive today, could very well be in the hands of your competition tomorrow. With that in mind, I can't stress enough the importance of taking full advantage of your leads as soon as you receive them.

New leads are not meant to be pinned to a bulletin board or written on a sticky note and posted on your computer monitor. They are meant to be acted on as soon as possible.

When it comes to the thought processes of any consumer their first instinct is to shop around for a new product or service by researching on the Internet, making phone calls and asking questions. So with any new lead that you receive you can be sure that they have also looked at or checked with at least one or more of your competitors.

The timing on a lead is so important, the moment you receive the lead, pick up the phone and make contact with that person. If you wait too long two things could happen

1. Your competition will get the jump on you.
2. You will be giving your potential customer the opportunity to find another place to take their business.

By letting a hot lead sit around and cool off, you can rest assured that you are almost guaranteed to lose that new customer. Put yourself in the shoes of the consumer. Would you appreciate receiving a call several days after your initial inquiry? Chances are you wouldn't and I'm pretty sure that by then you would've lost interest and moved on to the competition.

I don't think your customer would appreciate a phone call three to five days after you have received their information. Even if they are still on the market for your product, you won't be off to a good start.

Now let's go over a few other common mistakes that are often made when it comes to following up with a new lead.

- Giving up on a lead too soon.

It's sad but true that many business professionals give up on a new lead too soon eliminating any possibility of closing the sale. It is important to have a system in place for continuous follow-up. You need to create a plan for contacting a new lead multiple times before you move them to the dead pile. Only you can decide how many times that will be, but the standard contact scenario is 7 to 8 times before closing a sale. Keep them in your email program. Email that list first that you are having a sale before you advertise it. You will get a few new paying customers for it. You paid for the lead already, might as well utilize it.

- Assuming that your new lead is ready to buy on first contact.

This goes back to relationship building. As we have discussed before it is important to find common ground with your new potential customer. While this may take some time it is an important part of the process, so that you can build a level of trust between you and your potential customer.

Just remember to always keep in mind that leads are meant to be acted on, so the next time you receive a hot lead don't waste anytime making that initial contact.

Lesson # 7

Tried and True Methods

In the last lesson we talked about taking full advantage of every new lead that you receive. In this lesson we are going to go over a few tried and true methods that you can use to increase your sales.

When it comes to increasing sales and income there are many strategies that you can employ. As a matter of fact if you do a search online for the term "increase sales" you will be barraged with hundreds and thousands of results filled with tips and advice to help you reach your goals. While we're not going to be able to cover all of those topics in this lesson we are going to go over a few tried and true methods that I like to use myself.

Even those these are simple, they are extremely effective and when used properly can definitely help you increase your sales.

- Stress the benefits

When it comes to closing the sale it's important that you talk about the benefits of your product or service and save the features for later. Remember that Features "Tell" and Benefits "Sell". Your customers don't want to know all the details on how your product or service works they just want to know how it will benefit them! I use the example of "I love hotdogs. I don't care how they are made" all the time.

Benefits show off the value of your product much better than features. Let your prospective customer know exactly what your product can do for them. Will it help them save more money, have more time, reduce their stress, give them an ego boost, help them live longer, etc. This is what they want to know and this is what will help you sell more of your products and services.

- Good, honest communication.

As we have discussed before communication is key. It is important to follow-up with potential buyers in a timely manner. By keeping the lines of communication open you gain more trust and credibility. This will turn into more sales of your product or service!

Encourage your customers to ask questions. Always do your best to put them at ease and let them know that they're not bothering you or wasting your time to ask you a question. Answer each question honestly and promptly. Remember, customers can tell when you're lying. If you don't know the answer to the question, don't lie to them just tell them you'll find out for them as soon as possible and let them know.

While these are only a few simple things that you can do they are all tried, tested and guaranteed to be effective when it comes to increasing your sales.

Lesson # 8

Even the Best Products Don't Sell Themselves

In the last lesson we talked about communication to increase your sales. In this lesson we are going to talk about why even the best products don't sell themselves.

Just because you have the best product in the world doesn't mean that it will sell all by itself. Chances are you've heard the term "build it and they will come". In the world of sales that translates to "if you make it, it will sell". It's a wonderful dream, but more often than not it doesn't work like that.

While this may have been true in many decades ago, the simple truth of the matter is that there just weren't many products around back then and chances were if you made it, it would sell, simply because of the lack of competition. The same doesn't hold true today, especially with speed and technology that is used to spread consumer products on a global scale faster than ever before.

These days, just because you have a better product, doesn't mean that the product will automatically sell itself and make you rich! In the past, people weren't swamped with tons of advertising. Anything new or better was easily noticed by the masses because there wasn't much competition.

Today, if you have a better coffee pot, investment plan or even a car that runs on a few drops of water, you are still fighting an uphill battle against jaded consumer skepticism and high budget advertising campaigns.

To sell enough of your product or service so that you can actually see a profit you need to get the word out to the masses in a way that will catch their attention. The days of just putting a shiny new product on the shelf and talking about how works are over. As we have discussed before, you need to convey the benefits of your new product in such a way that people will want to purchase your brand over the other 47,000 competitors offering a version of the same thing.

It is not just important, it is vital that you learn how to stand out in a crowded marketplace! People aren't easily sold anymore, you have to convince them that your product or service is different, better and extraordinary. You must have a unique selling point and you must be prepared to tell them all about it.

Do whatever it takes to 'shock and impress' your target market. Be sure to always give them something to remember.

For example:

I am in marketing, it doesn't help if I keep talking about how good my marketing company is. It doesn't matter how efficient my marketing division is or how impressive my company's background may be.

Chances are my prospect knows my companies reputation. The key questions on my prospects mind are:

- Why should we bring our business to you over your shiny new competitor down the street?
- What can you do for me that they can't?
- What can YOU offer that will set you apart from them?

It's very important that you to remember that people buy from YOU, not just the company! So, when you're trying to stand out in a crowded marketplace don't just focus on the features of your product or service and expect them to sell their-selves. Focus on what your product can do for your customer and most importantly concentrate your efforts on what YOU can do for them.

Lesson # 9

Building Credibility and Branding Yourself

In the last lesson we talked about why even the best products don't sell themselves. In this lesson we are going to talk about how building credibility and branding yourself can help increase your sales.

Today, the average consumer is spoiled. When it comes to purchasing products they have a wide variety of options. They have the ability to research and comparison shop with a few clicks of their mouse. While, you may not have the most popular product in the marketplace you can still position yourself as the 'best' by employing a few good marketing strategies.

#1 Question; What makes you different from the competitor down the street?

If Your goal is to increase sales of your products and services, you have to stand out in today's crowded marketplace.(Are you certified, do you offer a loaner car, or do you)

#2 Question; Do you know what you need to do to establish yourself as an authority in your target market?

As we have discussed before consumers are inherently skeptical when it comes to making a purchase. Because there is so much competition in today's global marketplace, it is much harder to acquire a new customers and keep them than ever before.

This is where branding yourself and your business as an authority comes into play. When you are recognized as an expert in your marketplace, people are much more likely to trust what you have to say and purchase the products and services that you recommend. (That is why we offer 6 videos per month.)

Branding and building credibility virtually go hand-in-hand. While branding will help you make that first sale, credibility is what will help you keep your customers coming back for more!

FACT: When you take the time to build credibility for yourself and your business as a trusted brand, it will take less time to make repeat sales from existing customers and the people that they refer, compared to acquiring them the first time.

It's important understand when it comes to branding and building credibility that you don't just focus on branding your business, product or service. You also have to brand yourself. As I mentioned above being an authority in your marketplace helps build trust, which encourages customer loyalty and in turn leads to making more sales.

Some may say that branding and credibility are not that important when it comes to closing sale, but I disagree. By taking the time to properly place yourself as an expert in front of your target audience you are setting yourself apart from your competition in a big way.

And that's not all, when you build your own credibility, you become the 'go to' guy when people think purchasing the products or services that you offer, therefore saving you time and money when it comes to acquiring new customers.

So when it comes to taking time to brand yourself and your business don't take it for granted. Building your brand and credibility is not an option if you truly want to succeed in increasing sales.

Lesson # 10

The Importance of Qualifying Your Leads

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In the last lesson we talked about building credibility and branding yourself. In this lesson we are going to talk about the importance of qualifying your leads. We are talking about “qualifying” your lead nor “prejudging” your leads.

While going out of your way to please and pamper your customers in order to win over their business isn't necessarily a bad thing, it isn't always a good thing either. As a matter of fact if you spend too much time bending over backwards to please them just to win them over, you may be in for a huge disappointment when after all of your wooing they turn you down flat.

As we have discussed before, consumers are smart, they are also very savvy and wary of anyone who is trying to sell them something. But that doesn't stop them from taking full advantage of your hospitality before they tell you to hit the road. If you truly want to increase your sales and build your business it's important that you learn how to separate the real prospective customers from the ones who are just window shopping and looking for a freebie or two.

When it comes to weeding out serious leads from the ones who will simply waste your time it is important to have a solid process in place for prioritizing and qualifying them. You can do this by simply having a list of questions ready to weave into the conversation.

These can be as simple as asking them:

- How they found out about you?
- Where they referred to you by someone else?
- Are they experiencing a problem?
- Do they need a solution fast or are they just shopping around?
- Do they have the means to purchase and are they ready to buy now?

Depending on what type of business you're in or what product or service you're trying to sell the questions may vary. The point is that the process doesn't have to be difficult and the questions don't have to be complicated.

You will be amazed to find out how quickly you can identify the difference between a prospect that is serious and one that is just looking around by asking a few simple questions. As a matter of fact most of the time you will be able to determine whether or not they really want your product or service within the first few minutes of your conversation.

By taking the time to make sure that your new leads meet your set criteria for a preferred customer, you are not only saving and money time, you will be sure that you are attracting high quality customers and increasing sales as well.

Lesson # 11

What Motivates People To Buy...

In the last lesson we talked about the importance of qualifying your leads. In this lesson we are going to talk about what motivates people to buy.

Seriously, what motivates people to buy?

This is the one question that everyone in who has a product or service to sell wants to know the answer to. After all, if you know how to motivate your potential customers to buy, then you will be able to quickly increase your sales and your conversion rate, which is the ultimate goal of anyone in sales.

So, what is the answer to that question? What really does motivate people to buy?

It is often said that you should give people what they need, because that is what they are going to buy. That may well have been the case a few decades ago, but sadly in today's marketplace things have changed and people no longer buy based on what they need.

Instead they buy what they want. Statistics show that in today's media driven society people are actually spending more money on the things that they want like, plasma TV's, satellite system's and recreational vehicles than they are on the necessities like food and shelter!

So it only stands to reason that if you have a product or service that you are trying to sell you need to present it to your prospect as something they want. Focus on what's in it for them, stress the benefits and make them feel like it is something they absolutely must have. That they don't want to live without.

People also buy because they get pleasure from what they buy. Someone doesn't walk into a car dealership and buy a top of the line Mercedes because they need it; a nice Toyota or Chevy would have done the job just as well.

They buy the Mercedes because they want that feeling of pleasure that they feel every time they're driving it. Whether it is the comfort of the plush leather seats, all the shiny gadgets, or the fact that it is a status symbol, they love driving their Mercedes! Whatever their reason for buying that Mercedes you can rest assured that their decision was based on want and not need.

Want is not the only thing that motivates people to make a purchase. While it is the leading contender, there are many other triggers that will motivate them to whip out their wallets and buy your product or service.

Let's quickly go over a few:

- To make or save more money
- To save time
- To be more comfortable
- To be healthier
- To be popular
- To increase enjoyment
- To attract the opposite sex
- To escape pain and sadness
- To avoid trouble
- To make life easier
- To take advantage of opportunities

These are only a few of the triggers that will motivate people to buy. If you want to learn how to effectively motivate your prospects to take action then you need to find out what they want and then present your product or service to them in a manner that makes them feel like they can't live without it.