



“Salespeople cultivate customers through prospecting and referrals; they convert customers into clients by establishing and maintaining a relationship that allows them to build a sense of trust.”

Times are tough – but as an old adage reminds us, “when the going gets tough, the tough get going.” In business, a good salesperson knows how to ride economic waves. They know exactly how to take a group of leads and build them into a loyal base of customers and clientele who return time and again for products and services; who bring in referrals; and who increase the potential to close a sale by as much as 500%.

A Positive Mindset Generates Positive Actions

Most salespeople are driven by commissions. So imagine if they viewed every person they encountered as a prospective client. Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary defines client as “a person who pays a professional person or organization for products and services, a person who engages the professional advice or services of another, and one that is under the protection of another.”

If salespeople viewed every person they met as a client – someone under their care who seeks professional advice and products or services – the potential for sales would increase dramatically. This seemingly simple change in mindset and attitudes makes a world of difference in sales, commissions, and profits.

Creating a mindset that perceives every individual who comes into a business as a client is one of the first steps in driving sales and increasing commissions and profits. However, it is a proven fact that when a client comes into a business and specifically asks for a particular salesperson, the closing percentage skyrockets. To achieve this, salespeople must know how to prospect.

Prospecting – Reviving A Lost Art

Prospecting has three primary results: an appointment for an immediate sale; referrals to new prospects actively looking to buy, and creating future prospects. Successful prospectors know that while there are many approaches, the best methods are in-person (personal), telephone, and written communication.

Yet today, most salespeople don’t have the first idea about how to prospect successfully.

This is where managers, as the coaches and leaders, come in. The first step is to focus the team on the overall goal – changing the variables they control, beginning with driving traffic – and then to change their mindset.

Develop a game plan and create opportunities for the team to practice, play and win. It’s like Vince Lombardi says, “Practice does not make perfect. Only perfect practice makes perfect.”

- The importance of team. Think of a professional football team. They practice for hours at least five days a week to play a single, one-hour game. The team who wins is not always the biggest, fastest, or best, but the one who goes in with a well-rehearsed game plan and then executes it. Practice, Play, and Win.

- Change the mindset. Teach the team to prospect – 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and yes even in your sleep. Take them out into the field and train them. Then be sure the team views each individual who enters the business as a customer with the ability and intent to purchase.

- Assign a dollar value to each customer. Every potential customer who comes to the business has the power to increase your paycheck along with the company’s gross.

Salespeople cultivate customers through prospecting and referrals; they convert customers into clients by establishing and maintaining a relationship that allows them to build a sense of trust. It’s this trust that allows clients to rely on the salesperson for advice, and allows the salesperson to secure more referrals and sales.

The bottom line is, prospect, prospect, prospect – every single day, not just when the business is bad or down. Prospecting needs to become an automatic reflex, like breathing, an act that happens successfully and continuously.

With a positive mindset, a view toward the future, and the right training, salespeople will understand the need and will continue to prospect for opportunities and loyal clientele, regardless of how business is doing.

Richard F. Libin is the author of the book, Who Stopped the Sale? and president of APB-Automotive Profit Builders, Inc., a firm with more than 43 years experience working with both sales and service on customer satisfaction and maximizing gross profits through personnel development and technology. He can be reached at rlibin@apb.cc or 508-626-9200 or www.apb.cc. (www.whostoppedthesale.com)