

# **The Sales Process: How To Not Come In Second**

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As CEO, president or business owner, have you ever thought about how ineffective your sales department may be? Imagine a sales department that spends hours and hours developing proposals, rehearsing presentations, creating marketing materials only to lose the deal. The sales department might point to the quality of the presentation and offer as proof of the fact they made it to the final cut. However, if the sales person did not close the sale he or she has failed the company. The only good presentation is one where the customer says yes; otherwise, you're left only with wasted time, effort and money.

This article is not about sales technique. It is about how a CEO, President or business owner may want to think about the process of selling.

Sales volume and number of customers are the driving force that rules every aspect of the company. When sales people close sales consistently, revenues will be up, jobs are secure and the future of the company is bright. If sales aren't going well, jobs are in question, expansion plans are halted and virtually every aspect of the company's future operations in doubt. Investing the time perfecting the performance of your sales department will pay overwhelming dividends that translate into a future of growth and prosperity for your company.

The process begins with the sales department understanding every component of your customer base – where they are, what they want, and, perhaps most important, how you can solve their problems.

Begin by developing a profile of your target customer base. The better your sales department understands your potential customer, the better positioned

they will be to explain to the prospect how your company's products or services can help solve problems which will translate into increased sales.

### **Getting the Appointment**

Selling begins with identifying the right prospect. Unless your sales department is targeting the decision maker it is wasting its time.

The sales department must understand the intent of the prospecting call is to identify potential customers who need your company's product or service – and to get an appointment.

As the sales executive is working toward the appointment, use the opportunity to gather the necessary information about the prospect's needs. Ask questions beginning with: who, what, when, where, why and how so the responses are not a simple yes or no. The sales executive must understand selling is about educating your customer. The goal is to get good, qualified appointments that will turn into sales.

### **Be The Expert**

Ultimately customers want to know what's in it for them. Sales people gain the prospect's trust by addressing those needs with examples of what the company has to offer. Throughout the meeting, the sales person should guide the discussion to provide proof, carefully presenting facts and benefits that fit with the agreed upon needs of the prospect. Emphasize results, but without overstating the case. Nothing will end the sale faster than the prospect perceiving they haven't been told the truth.

As the meeting progresses, the sales person maintains dialogue by encouraging questions that help pinpoint the thoughts of the prospect. The key for the sales person is to effectively address all of the customer's concerns so that when the time for the final decision comes, getting to 'yes' will be easy.

Many sales people mistakenly think they've lost a sale because of cost concerns, but, in fact, studies have indicated that typically cost is not the number one objection. The truth is most sales that did not close failed to do so either because the sales executive didn't establish a personal relationship with the customer, made an ineffective presentation, or delivered unsatisfactory answers to the prospect's concerns.

### **Closers Close Sales (No Excuses)**

The close starts the moment your sales force says hello to the prospect and includes every word they use, every move they make, how they present themselves, even how they dress. Countless books have been written on the subject. Educate yourself in sales techniques so you can better manage your sales force.

The bottom line is that sales people close sales. Anything less is unacceptable. They do not hesitate to ask for the order. They give the customer what they want, and, in return, the sales person, the company and the economy prosper.

So take a look around your sales department and decide how effectively it is operating. Is your sales force boasting of quality presentations, yet bemoaning the prospects that just couldn't be closed? Or are the results speaking for themselves? Taking the time to analyze the situation and better train your sales department to effectively find prospects and consistently close sales could be the difference between a company that slumbers lazily and one that bulldozes its way into a new level of growth and prosperity.

*Howard Lewinter, Business Management Specialist, guides, focuses and advises CEOs, presidents and business owners throughout the United States. Business leaders consult with Howard to lessen business stress, solve business problems and issues and to achieve more company profit and growth. For more information on Howard's unique style of business consulting go to, [www.TalkBusinessWithHoward.com](http://www.TalkBusinessWithHoward.com), or call Howard direct, toll-free at 888-738-1855.*

