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# Power-Packed Prospecting Pointers

by BILL BROOKS

**“H**e that questioneth much shall learn much,” said Francis Bacon. Nowhere in sales is that statement truer than in the prospecting phase of selling. As part of that strategy, let’s examine a basic but important principle of value-based selling: In a crowded marketplace, all other things being equal, the one with the most information, who applies it most effectively, wins.

Translating that statement into a prospecting principle that you can use in your sales career gives us what can be called, **Power-Packed Prospecting Principle I:** *The most productive sentence in the salesperson’s vocabulary always ends with a question mark!*

Good prospecting is a matter of developing a solid game plan that works well for you, then following that game plan to the letter.

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## The Prospecting Pointers

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We have tested lots of ideas for Power-Packed Prospecting with leading salespeople in all fields. These seven are our gems we have collected through more than 25 years of experience in sales training and consulting.

Although you may be an established sales professional, you’ll

probably find several of them useful. In fact, I guarantee it:

**1.** Treat prospecting as the lifeblood of your sales career. Not the clichéd definition, but what I call Power-Packed Prospecting:

- Focus on quality. It is the only way you can spend most of your prime time with qualified prospects. It also is the only way you can have enough hours in a week to be successful.
- Focus on quantity. Your success depends on having enough solid sales leads.
- Focus on consistency. A steady supply of qualified prospects can enable you to avoid slumps and plateaus, eliminate call reluctance

and procrastination and keep you from pressuring current customers.

- Do it now. Increasing your prospecting effectiveness is the fastest single way to boost your sales and income.

**2.** Treat prospecting as your most valuable time-management tool. Remember that you are always looking for ways to better leverage your time:

- Use it to avoid wasting prime time on people who are not qualified to say “yes.”
- Use it to ensure that you will always have enough qualified prospects to keep you productively busy.



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- Avoid wasting time with sloppy or haphazard prospecting.

**3.** Take an organized approach. Never keep leads on scraps of paper or Post-it notes. Use a contact management program. Whichever platform you choose, select one that ensures you will never:

- Lose or forget about valuable leads.
- Be late on promised follow-up calls and visits.
- Waste time looking for lost information.
- Improperly value your prospect inventory.
- Fail to do mailings and other footwork due to a disorganized prospect list.
- Become a compulsive procrastinator when it comes to developing your prospect inventory.

**4.** Remain alert for “suspects” who have the potential to become qualified prospects. In today’s fast-paced society, people’s needs may change rapidly and radically, giving you prospects where you had never thought to look.

- Develop a prospecting mindset that automatically asks, “Is this person a prospect?”
- Assume all suspects are prospects until proven otherwise.

- Keep looking for new places to find prospects.

• Cultivate mutually beneficial relationships with everyone who can give you leads or open doors for you.

• Take full advantage of every effort by your organization to generate leads. Maintain close alignment with your marketing department.

• Always make it your policy to secure referrals from satisfied customers.

**5.** Stay in constant touch with active prospects through phone calls, periodic mailings and personal contacts. Keep in mind the “Top of the Consciousness Principle” which states that:

- The only certain way to ensure your customers think of you first is through frequent, repetitious contact.
- Others are always competing for a finite amount of your prospect’s attention and dollars.
- You never know when your prospect’s motivation to buy will suddenly, dramatically increase.
- You need to be sure that he or she thinks of you or your product first when they evaluate how to fulfill their business needs.

**6.** Rework your suspect inven-

tory regularly to try to upgrade suspects to the status of qualified prospects. A good filing system will help tremendously:

• Learn to use the telephone in a professional, pleasant and business-like manner. Then use it regularly.

• Constantly search for people who can give you a referral for every suspect on your list. Or, better still, will they make a contact for you?

• Look everywhere for the slightest clue that the suspect’s buying status might be changing.

**7.** Continually upgrade your prospecting system and strategies:

• For a steady flow of fresh ideas, you should read books, journals, magazines and business news, listen to CDs, invest in CD-ROMs, watch videos, attend seminars and talk to other successful salespeople.

• Above all, keep a positive attitude about prospecting. Make a game out of it.

The key to a successful sale is knowing how to open. And it all starts with an organized, systematic approach to prospecting. After all, without an adequate supply of prospects who would you sell your product or service to, anyway? □

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