
Powerful Prospecting Tips

by JOHN BOE

Selling is a contact sport, and prospecting for new business is the name of the game! You'll 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.

Here are practical tips to help you become more effective at generating new business and following up with prospects:

- **Prospecting for new business is similar to working out.** You know it's good for you, and it will produce positive results if you do it routinely. Professional salespeople prospect daily. It's important to block off specific time on your calendar for prospecting activities such as phone calling and e-mailing. 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 e-mails, 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.

- **Be prepared, get organized, and take good notes.** It's critical to have a computerized contact system to record remarks and future contact information or appointments.

- **Use a script — don't shoot from the hip.** There's 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's 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'll 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.

- **Strike while the iron is hot!** When working with a new prospect, it's important to make contact quickly. Prospects are perishable. No matter how interested a prospect may appear, don't wait for them to call you. You are only one of many competing interests for your prospect's time and money.

- **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 his or her own conclusions from your comparison.

- **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

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

John Boe, a sales trainer and motivational speaker, helps companies recruit, train and motivate salespeople to achieve peak performance. He 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 www.johnboe.com or call (877) 725-3750.



When working with a new prospect, it's important to make contact quickly. Prospects are perishable.

the Hall of Fame. Research indicates that in sales you can expect your prospect to say *no* five times before he or she buys. With this in mind, realize that with every sales rejection you receive, you are one step closer to making the sale.

Prospecting for new business should be viewed more as a mind-set rather than merely as an activity. It's 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. □

Copyright © 2005, Manufacturers' Agents National Association

One Spectrum Pointe, Suite 150, Lake Forest, CA 92630-2283 • Phone: (949) 859-4040 • Toll-free: (877) 626-2776 • Fax: (949) 855-2973
E-mail: MANA@MANAonline.org • Web site: www.MANAonline.org • All rights reserved. Reproduction without permission is strictly prohibited.