

Technology In Business

Use It, Don't Rely On It

BY NATHAN JAMAIL

Grab your Blackberry and check your appointments, while you're at it, see if any of your clients have posted anything worthwhile on Facebook, tweet your new prospect, check your e-mail for any new appointment requests and then go grab lunch — what a day! More and more sales professionals are relying on technology to drive sales and increase market share; unfortunately that is the first step to staying mediocre.



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The gatekeeper now is voicemail with a delete button....

Getting sales professionals to find vertical markets and make outbound prospecting calls as well as setting sales appointments with prospective buyers (in person!) is still the *best way* to increase sales — period. All of the technology in the world *cannot* close more deals than getting in front of the decision maker, so put away those e-mail marketing techniques, fax-ready sales pitches and automatic voicemail calling systems. It is no more difficult today than it was 20 years ago; we just have new excuses.

The gatekeeper now is voicemail with a delete button vs. a receptionist and a pink message pad. The great handwritten letter to the decision maker and the trashcan has been replaced with e-mail systems that have auto junk mail programs. The prospective customers have always been too busy or happy with their current product or service to meet. Principles and disciplines of getting new sales are the same today as 20 years ago; the tools and skills needed to get the appointment are new.

Make the Call

What do nice letters, great e-mails, logo gifts, catchy tag lines and marketing campaigns all have in common? Every salesperson hopes that it will be the “new thing” that gets their phones to start ringing by prospective customers, but in short they are all just a “another reason for a salesperson not to make a prospecting call.” No matter what marketing idea or event you use to attract prospective customers, the sales professionals still must make


the follow-up *call*. If you are going to use a technology-based tool (e-mail campaigns, voicemail systems, etc.), use it only as a tool for *you* to follow up with the prospective customer, not as an excuse for you to wait for customers to call you.

“Social Media” is Just Another Tool, It is *Not* a Sales Plan

Social media is powerful and there are many experts that have shown and believe that social media can really help a company become better known, or take the “word-of-mouth” to another level. Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn are some of the great social media forums, but they alone will not increase a company’s sales. It is a nice added inexpensive media outlet (and highly encouraged!), but if social media is the primary source for a company to attract new customers or to sell their product and services then they are sure to fail.

Social Media should work in conjunction with a marketing and prospecting plan that is based on network marketing, cold calling, vertical marketing and other key prospecting activities. Prospect- ing is still the most difficult part

of any company’s sales process, but it is not complicated. Prospect- ing is 90% discipline and 10% skill set. Sales professionals should take the time to learn how to maximize their social media, but they should not rely on it to make their sales. In the old days, sales professionals were taught to follow their dollar. This means where a sales profes- sional spends money, they should look there for future prospects as well including friends and family; the “old” social network. Just like then, as it is now, social network- ing is not the only way to grow business and should not be relied upon exclusively.

If increasing sales was only about coming up with some cre- ative way for prospects to call then companies would not need profes- sional salespeople and especially the added expense of their high salaries. If you want to increase sales in today’s economy, then *use* the technology of today with the disciplines and principles of yester- day. It has been said a million times and it is still true; increasing sales is simple, but not easy. People are still buying; the question is whom are they going to buy from? Make the call! 



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