



## The Builder of **SALES CHAMPIONS!**

### **May 2009 Newsletter** **Are You Missing Opportunities for New Business?** **by Tom Hopkins**

In sales, "getting new business" is also called "prospecting." Unfortunately, using that term tends to turn off average salespeople who are afraid of doing it. If you know how to prospect properly, you'll never fear doing it.

The best place to start prospecting is with people who have already paid money for products and services similar to yours. If you're selling exercise equipment, begin with people who jog, belong to health clubs, or join local sports teams. Why? Because you will know they're already health conscious. The convenience of being able to exercise at home may be just what they're looking for.

If you're selling graphic design, start with the people responsible for advertising in local companies. If you've already worked for people in a certain type of business (such as gift shops), you may want to concentrate on other gift shops in the area. The items in your portfolio will then be very appropriate displays of your work.

When you're finally prepared enough with knowledge about your product, service, or concept and have a good level of selling skills, you then need to begin finding those people. Because you won't have a lot of qualifying, presenting, closing, or follow-up to do when you're new, your primary focus should be on prospecting. In fact, early in your selling career, your daily plan should be to invest about 75 percent of your time prospecting. The other 25 percent of your time should go toward developing your product knowledge and presentation skills.

So, how do you find these elusive, but absolutely essential prospects? Read on!

#### **Friends and Relatives**

The first potential clients that usually come to mind are friends and relatives. Then, move to people you come in contact with on a social basis. Those you meet socially would include fellow church members, school workers, and those you enjoy doing your hobbies or playing sports with. Business friends would include people you have worked with in the past or met through workshops or clubs and organizations specifically set up for business professionals.



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### **Other Salespeople**

One area of prospecting that is often overlooked is other salespeople. Work up a win-win situation with other salespeople by sharing leads or finding a complement in your product or service to what they have to offer. The favors you give away often return tenfold.

Do your prospecting efforts end with your last appointment of the day? If you answer yes, you've closed your eyes to a lot of business.

Enjoying a dinner in a restaurant, shopping in a mall, dropping off dry cleaning, and purchasing groceries put you in contact with potential future clients. If you're in network marketing, you can benefit by turning those who have demonstrated good people skills on to your business. In doing so however, never intrude on their work time. Simply say, "I can't help but notice that you have a nice way with people. I'm curious, are you achieving all of your goals working here? The reason I ask is that the firm I represent is in an expansion mode and we're looking for quality people to take advantage of the opportunity. Do you have an interest in knowing more?"

If they do, say: "Ethically, because you're working now, I'm not at liberty to discuss it. However, if you'd like to jot down a number and time I can reach you when you're not working, we can visit and see if it's a win-win possibility."

Always carry your business cards with you and freely hand it out to those you feel particularly impressed with. Following up with a letter or thank you note regarding the service they provided leaves a good impression of you and your company.

### **Client Lists**

Any business that's been around for at least three years should have a pretty good client list. The question you must ask your business owner or manager is how many salespeople have come and gone during that time? It could be those salespeople haven't necessarily gone away, but are now in other positions in the company. If those clients weren't reassigned to another salesperson to keep in touch with them, ask for the authority to contact them yourself.

Some may get left in the dust when a change occurs in the sales staff. Why not be the one to pick them up, dust them off, and take care of them? Don't leave the door open for a competitor to come in and snatch up valuable clients. Prospect your list of past business and you could not only solidify their future business, but some great new referred leads.



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### **Newspaper**

A favorite prospecting tool, and one that is the greatest source around, can be delivered to your doorstep for under a dollar a day in most areas. It's the newspaper. I used to read mine with a pen so I could circle all of the opportunities I found. The local news, business, and announcement sections are the most beneficial portions of the paper.

Circle who has been promoted in business, who recently had a baby, who just started up a new business, who just sold or purchased a home in the community, and so on. Then, contact them. You do this by cutting out the article. Make a copy for yourself. Then send a brief note, saying, "I saw you in the news. I'm in business in the community and hope to meet you someday in person. I thought you might enjoy having an extra copy of the article to share with friends or relatives." Always include your business card.

People love seeing that they were in the news. And they love having extra copies of the articles to send to friends and relatives who are not in the local area. When you follow up, you'll already have something in common to talk about — the news item. By providing this small service in a non-threatening way, you can gain a lot of big business. I know I did. You can, too.

### **TIMELY TIP**

#### **Using Email Effectively**

Using email for prospecting and selling is one of the most powerful online tools a professional salesperson can have. Unlike the passive strategy of a web site where you have to wait until someone visits your site before you can present to them, email is an active selling tool. You can compose a selling message any time and send it out to a database of prospects or your list of clients.

But don't think you can send just any email message out to whomever you please. There are rules to this kind of contact and communication. And if you break them, you can seriously harm your credibility and reputation. One thing you don't want to be accused of is spamming your recipients. That means using only opt-in email lists — or permission marketing — which has a set of 'best practices' that should be followed.

What you do is get your client's and prospect's permission to send emails before your message shows up in the email box.

Remember that building trust with your customer is job one for the professional salesperson. And your customer is your most precious resource.



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### **CLOSE OF THE MONTH**

#### **The Reduction to the Ridiculous Close**

This strategy involves converting total or monthly amounts of money into daily amounts that make the investment seem more 'do-able.' Depending on how open your clients are, you might want to hand them a calculator and do the math themselves. This doesn't mean you don't do it. Simply have them do it along with you.

Step #1: Use the It Costs Too Much Close to get a fixed amount.

"John, today most things do. Can you tell me about how much 'too much' you feel it is?"

Step #2: Establish how many years they will enjoy the product or service.

Step #3: Divide amount by years to get the annual amount.

Step #4: Divide annual amount by 52 weeks per year to get the weekly amount.

Step #5: Divide weekly amount by 5 or 7 days to get the daily amount. When you get down to a daily amount, simply say, "John, Mary, do you think you should give up all the benefits we've been discussing for only \$(daily amount) per day?"

**YOU MUST KNOW YOUR MATH!!!**

Excerpted from Sales Closing for Dummies - \$16.99.