

Optimizing Account Acquisition using the REVENUE Process.

Using process improvement to systematically teach salespeople how to improve new customer acquisitions.

REVENUE ACCELERATORS

09



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1. Knowing that outbound phone/email work is a process, not an event.

Openers must not reveal that you are calling to schedule an appointment or close a sale. Selling too soon is a major contributor to poor results. People go through a natural process when deciding to take action, so there's no point in trying to circumvent it. Sales people must be prepared to ease the prospect step-by-step through a process of buying an offer or call objective.

One way to look at a first contact is: we are moving him/her from Stranger to Deactivated Listener to Acquainted Person to Interested, Open Party, to Agreement to taking Desirable Action.

2. Pre-write openers and positioning statements so they are brief and meaningful.

It's too hard to "wing it, and takes years of practice before a great sales/communicator develops their ideal wording to describe or explain their value. The best salespeople eventually come up with statements that are very gripping; but no one has time to wait for this to be done. With salespeople at different levels of experience explaining solutions (products/services), and unfortunately, features/benefits, the need for concise value statements and confidence has never been higher. Eliminating the "ums" and "ahs" and lack of smoothness, is critical in today's ADD business climate; or you sound like all the rest of the cold callers.

Be 100% sure you know how your company can save the prospect time or money. Promises are not a strategy! You must be able to quickly convey where time now spent will be reduced, or money now spent will be retained. Use well written value statements to assert this with proof, and make it easy to understand and exciting to buy.

3. Every touch needs to have a goal.

Sales people, who typically aim too low, are accustomed to pursuing prospects for months before they learn anything at all. They seem busy with some "call backs" but no one knows if their time is being spent with actual prospects. And, if it's not, revenue capture will reflect that. So, if a prospect is tough to reach, then a lot must be accomplished on a 1st contact. So, who isn't tough to reach? Therefore, we must absolutely have a solid objective for the initial contact. If it's a 2nd or 3rd contact, the stakes are even higher. To be sure salespeople can separate the "call objective" from the "process of the call" try explaining it this way:

Objectives:

- ✓ Appointment with top decision-maker?
- ✓ Presentation in front of buying committee?
- ✓ Agreement to review a well positioned proposal?
- ✓ Arrange a demo?
- ✓ Arrange a second meeting to review proof points?
- ✓ Ask for a commitment backed by proof?

4. Focus on your decision maker in order to build interest.

If you can't build interest, you won't create action. Every decision-maker must hear "the reason I'm calling" followed by something that is relevant to him/her. Help your salespeople by: Targeting a group of calls by industry, or by contact title/job description; and facilitate this by pre-writing a "value" statement to build demand. Knowing Managing Partners at CPA Firms speak a similar language, IT Directors in manufacturing companies speak another, CEO's of mid-sized firms speak another, etc.

5. Make the telephone conversation interactive.

Good communicators know that they must be excellent listeners, and listen 80% of the time! As an example, it's perfectly natural for neighbors to meet on the sidewalk and share a conversation where each feels welcomed and empowered. It might sound like this:

Neighbor 1: "Hello. I haven't seen you around lately. How've you been?"

Neighbor 2: "Not bad. I've had the flu and haven't left the house in 2 weeks. *Anyone in your family sick?"*

Neighbor 1: "Not at my house, thank goodness. I was wondering about you though. *Is that why your lawn looks overgrown?"*

Neighbor 2: "My son's been in charge of mowing, but all he cares about is basketball. *Did you see the Celtics last night?"*

Notice that each person uses a technique we call "statement/question pairs". This is something that they were probably not taught; but instead, perform naturally in order to maintain their chat. From this, we learn 2 important things that apply directly to the business telephone conversation:

- a) If you make a pleasant statement first, you can get away with asking almost any question.
- b) Whoever is asking the question is in control of the subject of the conversation.

6. If it sounds like anything a telemarketer would say, don't say it.

The last 30 years have been brutal on the image of telemarketing. Even though most companies are reputable, most callers are honest and most products and services offer good value, more often than not prospects have very bad things to say about being contacted by phone. Review your scripts and sales tools and look for any statements that you remember from sales training or outbound scripts longer than 10 years ago. Delete anything you heard the last 3000 times you answered your home telephone.

Here are some that will kill your conversion opportunities:

"How are you today?" Unless you have a team of medical professionals, no one believes you care about their well-being.

"Businesses like yours/people like yourself..." these statements have completely lost their meaning. Be specific.

"I'm going to be in your area..." is never believed and has no value.

"We can help your company" How so?

"Our customers have been helped" Who are they?

7. Know your product/problem connection.

Don't have salespeople use marketing materials to understand the value of their products/services. Literature is designed for people who know their own problems and can make the transition from feature and benefit on their own. Therefore, have this done:

- ✓ Build a Value statement all solution benefits, in terms the decision maker wants to hear.
- ✓ Substantiate your value statements with actual customer performance metrics.

Help salespeople create a list of questions that will uncover these problems, avoid using a series of close-ended questions that ask "Do you have this problem?" "Do you have that problem?"

8. Measure "completed conversations" instead of "dials".

Sales results are activity driven, whether for Inside or outside selling. Have results based on the number of qualified prospects placed inside the pipeline. Have salespeople document how they advance the sales process or determine that no advancement is possible right now. To accomplish this, they need to have an interactive conversation that satisfies the measurement of advancing a deal. You have a completed conversation, when salespeople:

- ✓ Talk with the desired decision-maker.
- ✓ Conduct a conversation to answer their pre-built questions.
- ✓ Be able to explain and forecast the prospect's pain and next steps.

9. Rehires and role-play activities to get it right.

Pre-written dialog must be delivered in a convincing way, or the listeners won't feel engaged. The proper emotions are the key, and there are a few emotions that are essential here:

- ✓ **Enthusiasm** – use it with control, releasing multiple high and low vocal tones, and word speed to help deliver or "drive" of key words. No reading, and avoid a monotone delivery; as there is no middle ground here. Boredom will shorten the call and reduce the results.
- ✓ **Curiosity** – Make sure salespeople sound "curious" instead of "aggressive", by using the higher range of the voice, varied pitch and a lilt at the end to indicate the question mark.
- ✓ **Encouragement** – When you need to gain more information or cooperation, you must be able to make the contact feel comfortable and safe enough to go deeper. Have salespeople "drag out" their words and using the lower more soothing range of their voice.

10. Build 5-7 scripted VM messages and note which one use.

Campaigns to access decision makers are now running from 10-13 touch points. After trying to reach contacts 3 or 4 times, salespeople start to leave a shorter, canned message. This form of message carries less significance than the first 3-4 previous VM's or EM's. If the goal is to make an appropriate impression and to create a return call, then:

- ✓ Create a series of messages, all unique, to be used over 8-10 weeks.
- ✓ It could take 1 message a week for 2 months before you get a call back.
- ✓ Practice your delivery so touches sounds natural, and concise.
- ✓ Present your name in the beginning but not phone numbers; and 2X state the number.