

~ Tips for Sales People ~

Prospecting: Working Smarter, Not Harder

Forget about the old-fashioned idea that some folks are “born salespeople.” To successfully sell building products, you need to learn the science behind the sale.

Rick Davis, president of Building Leaders, Inc. and author of the book, *Strategic Sales in the Building Industry*, offers these tips for strategically prospecting leads in the marketplace:

Tip #1 – Schedule Appointments – Planned meetings equal good sales results. If you try the “drop in and hope” approach to prospecting, you’ll be sorely disappointed. Even cold calls should have established appointments. An unscheduled visit, whether with a client or a prospect, is an imposition on the time and assumes that the person has plenty of time to drop everything and meet with you. For a solid start to prospecting, establish an appointment and confirm it via phone or e-mail beforehand.

Tip #2 – Database Management – Knowledge is power, and your ability to harness knowledge makes you a powerful sales person. To achieve this, use whatever system works best for you, but write down and save key sales prospect information. Devise a way to include both personal information (i.e.: birth dates, sporting preferences, etc.) and business details (i.e.: competitive products used, company history, etc.). Make sure to update your filing system daily to stay on top of prospects and customers.

Tip #3 – Script It Out – First calls to prospective customers are always the hardest. Make life easier by having a written script or bullet points of information to convey in front of you while making the call and come to the point immediately. Don’t forget that your goal is to gain an appointment, so don’t use the phone call to qualify your prospective customer. Use it to get the face-to-face meeting.

Tip #4 - Territory Management – With the rising cost in fuel, it is more important than ever to manage your windshield time effectively. In addition to scheduling appointments to ensure productivity in the field, map out your territory to maximize your effectiveness during the day. Criss-crossing your marketplace wastes time and gas --- two precious and expensive commodities for any sales person.

Tip #5 – Prospect Rating – To make your prospecting efforts more successful, rate your customers and prospects on their potential profitability to you. Asking the right questions will lead you to determining if a customer has the potential for purchasing 10 or 1,000 widgets from you in a given year. Once you determine profitability potential, rank your customers and prospects from A to D. Spend the most amount of time with the A accounts and start looking to replacing the C accounts.

Based in Chicago since 1998, Building Leaders, Inc. has distinguished itself as the premier sales and sales management education specialists in the building materials industry. For more information, visit www.buildingleaders.com or call 773-769-4409.

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