

~ Tips for Sales People ~

In Business, Second Place is for Future Winners

Before you launch a bidding war for an account, consider how relationship-building and prospecting can make the runner-up position a better place to be.

Most salespeople, being competitive, regard second place as merely the first loser. But many times, being the “next choice of suppliers” is sometimes the best strategy. It makes a lot of sense to strike up relationships with as many people as you can and, rather than expect instant gratification for your sales efforts, take a longer-term approach. A prospect usually doesn’t make a change of suppliers until it is dissatisfied with an existing supplier. The first person they call is their “Second Place” choice!

Rick Davis, president of Building Leaders, Inc. and author of the book, *Strategic Sales in the Building Industry*, offers these tips, challenging you to rethink the way you deliver your sales messages.

Tip #1 – Get active - Unless a salesperson makes prospecting an urgent task and a daily (or weekly) priority, it is an easy responsibility to procrastinate for prolonged periods. Focus on cultivating relationships and positioning yourself in second place with as many prospects as possible.

Tip #2 – Plan your contact strategy – Early in my sales career, I was taught that the telephone was my No. 1 tool for productivity. Nearly 25 years later, I am still utilizing those phone skills but have now realized the need to integrate different forms of communication like e-mail, text messages and web meetings into my contact strategy. You need to do the same. This is why I am still developing phone scripts and e-mail templates for myself and clients many years later. They work!

Tip #3– Respect your prospect’s time – Today, more than ever, your prospects are extremely busy and their time is at a premium. Recognize that an in-person sales call, e-mail, or phone call is an interruption of their daily schedule. Learn to communicate WITH them in the way they want to be communicated TO and you’ll gain more permission to continue those relationships.

Tip #4– Make the first phone call or key stroke - The toughest phone call or e-mail is the first one. Stop procrastinating. There is only one way to begin a new relationship with a customer and that is by talking to them. Confucius said that a thousand-mile journey begins with a single step. Pick up the phone, type that e-mail and make contact!

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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