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Logic suggests that “more prospects” will lead to more sales.  While that may be true for some salespeople, for many others, “more prospects” actually leads to fewer sales.

“Prospects” are undeniably the essential element in the sales process.  However, the quality of the prospects and the pattern of interaction with them after the initial contact will determine if the sales process leads to closed sales…or closed files (and fewer sales).

What accounts for the difference?

It starts with the salesperson’s mindset.  Some salespeople are of the mindset that “everybody’s a prospect.”  These salespeople jump at the chance to tell their stories to anyone who will listen—voluntarily or otherwise…whether they’re truly interested or not.  And, that mindset gives rise to two problems.

First, the salespeople spend an inordinate amount of time chasing prospects of questionable quality.  Their quest being to convince those prospects that the product or service they have to offer deserves consideration.  The more time they are in “chase” mode, the less time they have to develop and close sales.

Second, during the appointments they eventually schedule, they waste additional time attempting to “convince” prospects of the merits of their product or service.  Their “convincing” approach (along with their “everybody’s a prospect” philosophy) fails to recognize the difference between a suspect (someone who may be curious about or have a casual interest in the product or service) and a prospect (someone who has a recognized need or acknowledged desire for the product or service).

Another element that accounts for the difference between “more prospects” leading to either more closed sales or more closed files is the process used to qualify and develop opportunities. The more structured (and perhaps stringent) the process to qualifying an opportunity, the more quickly *suspects* can be weeded out (wasting little time with them) and the more quickly opportunities can be developed and sales closed with qualified *prospects*. Salespeople with the “everybody’s a prospect” mindset, however, are likely to have an extremely flexible selling process (which in some cases means no defined process at all).

If you want “more prospects” to lead to “more sales,” first, be more selective about the people you target as prospects and with whom you invest your time.  Develop a profile of the “ideal” prospect derived from the characteristics of your most consistent and/or profitable customers and then target prospects that most closely fit the profile.  Even then, when a potential prospect expresses an interest in your product or service, quickly determine if that interest is driven merely by curiosity…or an actual need or desire for the outcome your product or service delivers.  Sometimes, it takes nothing more than a direct question like, “What specifically sparked you interest in…?” or “What are you hoping to accomplish by investing in…?”

# The “More Prospects” Paradox

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Notes from the Chair

 

Next, be more stringent in qualifying the various aspects of the opportunity. Prospects must not only have a legitimate need or desire for your product or service, but they must also have the wherewithal to obtain it. And, they must be in a position to make a decision in a reasonable manner and within a reasonable time frame – reasonable for you, that is.

When you focus your efforts on quickly identifying and weeding out *suspects*, and then use a selling process to methodically qualify the remaining *prospects*, “more prospects” will lead to more sales.



Counterproductive techniques salespeople use to deal with objections can set them back. To drive the point home of how prevalent the wrong techniques are, let’s look at a simple customer objection. The customer may say, “I don’t like the color.” Instead of finding out why, we find:

* Contradictions: “But it is the latest color. . .”
* Reflective listening: “Oh, so what you are saying is, you don’t like color?”
* Ignoring the objection: “Well, let me show you. . .”
* Interpretation, translation, assumption: “Oh, so the color is too dull: (but the customer’s concern is that it is the color of the opposing team!).
* “If” and “will”: “If I can get it in . . .color, will you buy it?”
* Platform changes: “What do you think of the fabric?”

All of these reflect a view of selling as telling, persuading, and convincing. But doesn’t it make more sense to respond naturally and sensibly as a five-year-old might simply (and deeply) asking: “Why not?” More politely phrased, of course: “The color is an important factor. What is it about the color you don’t like?”

**HAPPY SELLING!!!**

# Find Out Why!

# Are You Really Committed to Your Work?

Industrialist Andrew Carnegie said, “The average person puts only 25 percent of their energy and ability into their work. The world takes off its hat to those who put in more than 50 percent of their capacity, and stands on its head for those few-and-far-between souls who devote 100 percent.”

Besides people standing on their heads, there is another reason to exhibit exemplary work behavior. “Folks who never do any more than they get paid for,” said Elbert Hubbard, “never get paid for any more than they do.” When we drench ourselves in our work, rewards commonly follow.

Whatever our chosen career, we need to stop looking at work as simply a means of making a living and realize it is an essential ingredient in making a quality life.

# Are Your Customer Service Efforts Effective?

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First and foremost, regardless of your position or title, everyone at World Pac Paper is in the *customer service* business. World Pac Paper adds value through our customer-centric focus.

Here’s an example of well-intentioned customer service gone awry. Any subscriber to a certain newspaper published in a small Ohio town who calls to say that the paper wasn’t delivered is quickly delivered one – and a dozen roses – by the editor himself. The customer is mollified and may be satisfied, but the problem remains. The paper and the customer would be better served if someone else delivered the paper, and the editor found out how to be certain that all papers were delivered as promised. Disaster control should not be confused with solving problems that are endemic within the system.

Great customer service is the best!