

Sales Quote of The Month:

“He that is good for making excuses is seldom good for anything else.” – Benjamin Franklin

Sales Tip of The Month:

No one returning your voice mails? Maybe you are speaking too fast. When you leave your phone number, write it down at the same time. That will ensure you speak slowly enough so that your voice mail recipient will be able to write it down too!

Lose enough of the prospect's trust, and you lose the sale. The worst part is, you were the cause!

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Issue 1

Stop Losing Your Customer's Trust!

It's been said many times that prospects must feel they can trust you before they will buy from you. But what does "trust you" really mean?

It's simple. Prospects need to know you and your company will do exactly what you tell them you will do, when you said you will do it.

Every time you fulfill a commitment, you build trust. Every time you break a commitment, however, you lose trust. In fact, you do more damage than if you never made the promise in the first place.

Sometimes, it's what sales people think are the insignificant events that happen before the sales process even starts, that will make you lose enough of the prospect's trust to ensure that you will never sell them anything in the future.

For example, a sales rep who was trying to sell me a service left me a voice mail. I returned his message within 5

minutes, but he didn't call me back for over a week. I thought, "If this is the response I get when he is trying to win me as a customer, what kind of service can I expect once he has me as a customer." Needless to say, he did not manage to book the appointment once he finally got around to calling me back.

Another sales rep called to follow up on an email I had sent to his company inquiring about their services. I checked my sent items folder only to find that I had sent the email over 3 weeks ago.

Regardless of whether he had just received my email from his marketing department that day, or that he had just decided to follow up on it now is irrelevant. Either way, my first impression is that they will not respond to customer inquiries in a timely fashion, and they lost the opportunity to do business with me ever in the future.

Last week, four sales

"professionals" did not call when they said they were going to for their telephone appointments. And this is after each of them initiated the sales process with me!

Sales people believe that the sale stops when the contracts are signed. But customers believe this is when the sale is just beginning! If you give them reason to doubt that you will actually do what you promise you will once you have them as customer, sometimes no matter how valid the reason, they simply will not buy from you!

Every time you don't return a prospect's inquiry in a timely fashion, you lose trust. Every time you are a no show or are late for an appointment, you lose trust! Every time you do not meet a promised deadline, you lose trust.

If you over promise and under deliver, you lose trust. Lose enough trust, and you lose sales. The worst part is, you were the cause!



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Ask The B2B Sales Coach

Dear B2B Sales Coach:

If you could give sales people just one piece of advice to improve their sales performance, what would it be?

- Todd, Seattle, WA

Dear Todd,

It is hard to pick just one! However, if I look back on my career and search over the years for the one thing that made the most difference in my personal performance and that of my sales teams', I would have to say it would be creating an organized follow up or customer relationship management (CRM) system.

Regardless of the type of system you use, be it manual, be it automated in computer software or on a PDA, it is important that you use some sort of follow up system. In fact, I think it is critical for success in sales!

Most sales people have some type of follow up system, and most take the time to enter contact information like name, phone number and email address into them. However many forget the most important piece of information when entering in their contacts into their CRM and that's the "Next Sales Contact Date". Without this, even the most expensive CRM programs are only glorified phone books.

If you are not using a CRM system, start. If you do and your contacts are only organized alphabetically like the phone book, reorganize it chronologically. Any time I have worked with sales people to change their filing method of contacts from alphabetical to the date of next contact, follow up activities, and more importantly sales results improve dramatically!

Good selling!

- The B2B Sales Coach

Recommended Reading

Six Disciplines For Excellence – Building Small Businesses That Learn, Lead and Last by Gary Harpst

A very practical book. This is not a 30,000 foot level overview. It is designed almost in a "how to" fashion, examining all aspects of small and mid sized business needs. It takes best practices that already exist and creates a system to help you improve.

For more reading suggestions, visit www.b2bsalesconnections.com/books.php

About B2B Sales Connections

AIM HIGHER is written and edited by Susan A. Enns, managing partner of B2B Sales Connections. She has a proven track record of success, with over 22 years of direct sales, management and executive level business to business experience. She has also written the downloadable e-courses "Action Plan For Sales Success" and "Action Plan For Sales Management Success", and numerous automated sales tools.

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