

December 2008

Issue 1

Sales Quote of The Month:

"Don't wait for your ship to come in, swim out to meet it!"
- Gary Wood

Sales Tip of The Month:

Regularly receive updates to important computer files like price lists? Add the date to the file name when you save it. That way, you know that you will always be using the most up to date version!

Do you know exactly what is the next step to closing the sale? Do you know when that step is going to take place? Perhaps you should!

Control Your Sale's Time Frame

Many sales representatives absolutely dread their monthly sales forecasting meetings with their sales manager. Why? Often, it is because they really don't know what is the next step to close the sale. More importantly, they also don't know when that step is going to happen. As such, their forecasting accuracy is less than desired, and that makes for some unpleasant meetings!

To eliminate this, as sales professionals, we have to do a better job of controlling the time frame of each potential sale.

After your next sales presentation, try asking the following closing question: "Mr. Prospect, in your opinion, do you feel this is the right solution for your organization?" Let's assume for the purposes of this newsletter, the prospect answers yes.

The next logical question then becomes "Great, Mr. Prospect, what's the next step?" Regardless of the

answer you receive, you should always respond with clarification as to the time frame of when the next step will be completed.

For example, if the next step is that your contact needs to meet with someone higher in the organization, you should confirm when that meeting is going to take place, as well as what will happen after. "If you are meeting with you boss next Tuesday, I will call you Wednesday morning."

Sometimes, the customer will respond that they will call you when they are ready. Chances are that that won't happen, so you must control the time frame. "I can appreciate that you need some time to think things over. When should I expect to hear from you?" If the prospect says, Thursday, you should confirm that if you don't hear from him by then, you will call him Friday. This way, the sale is always moving forward and more importantly, you

know when.

Other ideas to control the time frame of your potential sales include:

- Put an expiry date on every proposal. A thirty day time limit is normally long enough. If you need longer, perhaps you were quoting too early in the sales process in the first place.
- Include an implementation schedule with your proposals. For example, if you know that the customer has to be up and running in 60 days, you can work backwards with operator training times, delivery schedules, and order processing times to know exactly when contracts must be signed.

Before your next sales forecasting meeting with your sales manager, look at your current prospect list. For each prospect, do you know exactly what is the next step to closing the sale? Do you know when that step is going to take place? If you don't, perhaps you should find out!



VISIT US AT:

www.b2bsalesconnections.com

CONSULTING SERVICES:

TORONTO:
905-426-3394

OTTAWA:
613-825-9139

info@
b2bsalesconnections.com

NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIPTIONS:

newsletter@
b2bsalesconnections.com

ASK THE B2B SALES COACH:

askthecoach@
b2bsalesconnections.com

CAREER CONNECTIONS:

SALES PROFESSIONALS:

candidates@
b2bsalesconnections.com

EMPLOYERS:

jobpostings@
b2bsalesconnections.com

Ask The B2B Sales Coach

Dear B2B Sales Coach:

I am having trouble booking appointments to present my recommendations to my prospects. Everything goes well in my needs analysis meetings, but when it comes time sit down and present my solutions, the prospect won't return my calls. Help!

- Karen, Calgary , AB

Dear Karen:

One of the biggest mistakes made by sales representatives is that they finish a needs analysis meeting or fact find with a statement like, "Thank you for your time, Mr. Prospect. I'll get back to you when my proposal is ready." Weeks of voice mail tag can go by before the next meeting, and by then all of the momentum created has long since been forgotten.

A better way to end your fact find is with a statement like "Thank you for the information today, Mr. Prospect. Based on our conversation, I believe that the use of our widgets can help you to acquire new customers and increase revenues. I would like to go back to my office, put my ideas on paper, and then return next week to discuss them with you. Are you available Tuesday at 10:00, or do you prefer Wednesday at 2:00?"

A fact find interview is only considered a success if you and the prospect confirm that the sales process should continue to the next step and when that will take place.

Eliminate voice mail. Always book the next appointment.

Good selling!

- The B2B Sales Coach

Recommended Reading

High Performance Selling – Advice, Tactics and Tools. The Complete Guide to Sales Success by Terry Black

This book is an easy read with short, to the point chapters. Very practical tips and ideas in the "Try This" sections of most chapters that will improve your sales skills.

To recommend a good sales or sales management read, please email the B2B Sales Coach.

About B2B Sales Connections

B2B Sales Connections provides consulting services to sales organizations and sales professionals in the business to business marketplace. Founded by successful, experienced professionals, the firm specializes in helping clients achieve greater sales success by focusing on recruiting, training and marketing services for both the employer and employee alike.

B2B Sales Connections - Canada's Premier Career Website for Business to Business Sales Professionals.