

Maximum Impact

Information and Ideas for Improving Sales, Image, and Profits

10 things you must understand about your prospects

1. Your prospects need you. Do you imagine that by promoting yourself, you are intruding on or interrupting your prospect? Are you thinking, "They won't want what I have," or "They've probably already got someone." Well, as Stock Photography Guru, Rohn Engh, likes to say, "At this very moment, your prospects are waiting for you." Whether it's true about a specific prospect is irrelevant; if you approach each prospect with that frame of mind, you'll make a better presentation.

2. Your prospects want to look good.

Things are kind of scary out there. No matter the industry, from construction to graphic design, things aren't the way they used to be -- not for you and not for them. So what they want from you, over and above what they're asking for, is that you make them look good; that's your real job.



3. Your prospects are... well, lazy.

That means you have to do some of their work: help them find you, help them contact you and then, of course, help them work with you. The fewer obstacles they have to surpass, the more likely they are to follow through, and the more likely you are to get the work.

4. Your prospects have got a lot going on. Don't lose sight of their big picture. In the office, there are interruptions galore. They can't get anything accomplished, their desk is a disaster area, their voice mailbox is jammed, their e-mail is stacking up.

In a word, things are out of control. You are just one of the many things they are trying to focus on. Now try to ask: why aren't they calling me back?

5. Your prospects act on impulse.

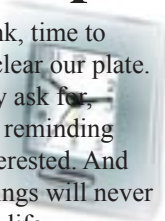
We all do this: we see something interesting, we get excited, we call for information and when it comes, we put it in a pile. Determine as quickly as possible if you're dealing with an impulse inquiry and waste as little time as possible with them. But don't write them off entirely; just put them on your quarterly mailing list and let them come back to you. Real needs and desires will stand the test of time.

6. Your prospects need to pigeonhole you. Although you hate it, let them do it; in fact, help them. Give them a box to put you in, and a label to put on your box. (I'm speaking figuratively here.) There's plenty of time to tell them more later about your full range of services.

7. Your prospects may not know what they need. Listen to them and provide a solution to their self-defined needs. Offer a few alternatives for them to choose from. If necessary, explain, (without trying to persuade), why what they say they want might not be the best thing for them. Then, let them decide.

8. Your prospects need time. It's not always a put off. Believe them when they say they have to think about it, or that they have to sell the idea to someone else.

We all need time to think, time to get ready, to adjust, to clear our plate. Give them the time they ask for, and then keep in touch, reminding them that they were interested. And remember that some things will never come to fruition. That's life.



9. Your prospects are people. Your relationships are not with companies; like it or not, they're with human beings. And relationships are more important now than ever because, with everyone moving around, you better believe they're taking the Rolodex (or Wizard) along.

10. Your prospects are just like you and me. Don't forget: you are a prospect to someone out there too. Which defenses do you use? How do you want to be treated when someone is marketing to you? How often do you want someone calling? How much freedom and time would you like to have to think about a product, to ask questions and to make your decision? How do you want to feel about the process when it is over?



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A leading waste-disposal provider, picked up a truckload of new clients with a clever incentive program.

Recognizing the value of word of mouth, the company decided to transform its 90 non-sales personnel into unofficial reps. A sports-themed campaign “*You Make the Call*,” rewarded employees for reporting qualified leads. To get things rolling, 15 designated “coaches” received whistle lights and info packets to use in training co-workers. Coaches who signed up team members were further recognized with back packs and coolers with the company logo. Employees submitting leads were entered into frequent drawings for the companies imprinted bottles, caps, bags, and coolers. Five leather jackets were also given away in monthly random drawings.

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