

CPC Sales and Marketing Training

Developing your potential

11 Great Ways to Improve Your Sales

Report

“Most of the people that I ask say that they don’t want to be “sold” to

So what is the secret to selling?”

I always reply there isn’t just one “secret” but there are a number of actions, which you can take to improve your sales success. So here we go...

11 great ways to improve your sales – Eleven ideas you can use today to start improving your sales

1. Make contact – and know your objectives

However you keep in touch with your potential customers, please do it. Now there are certainly plenty of ways to keep in touch these days, like social media, email, networking etc, etc, and they all have their place. But how about standing out, by arranging an event, or an open day – if you don’t have premises this can be at a hotel, or other business venue. Perhaps join with similar companies, and set it up as a specific mini show. It could be nothing to do with your service or product at all, such as a meal or fun event, and may be a thank you to your current clients, and a way to introduce new potential clients.

There is always a reason to call, even if it is just to ask your clients opinion about your new product or service.

Whether it is an event or a call, think about your objective beforehand, it may be:

Further qualification, (which we will come on to later)

To arrange an appointment

To find out the buyers contact details

To discuss a new product

There is nothing wrong with telling your client your objective, as long as there is a strong benefit to them.

When I sold Porsche we had a telephone enquiry from our Sunday Times advertisement. The potential client was asking about a nearly new Porsche 911 Turbo.

My objective was not to sell the car over the telephone (that would be ridiculous!) but to sell the test drive. This was a much smaller step for the client to take, and there was a benefit to him (he got to drive this fabulous Porsche!) After I qualified that this was potentially the right car for him, we agreed on a test drive. Once he experienced this beautiful car, in his own surroundings he went ahead with the purchase.

Action point

Call three of your potential customers with a reason (objective) to move forward that benefits them

2. Windows of opportunity, and service

Look at all of your existing clients /customers and all of the services or products that you provide

List the customers down one side, and the services along the top

Then simply place an X where a customer has bought a particular product or service. See below:

	PRODUCT A	PRODUCT B	PRODUCT C	PRODUCT D	PRODUCT E
CLIENT A	X	X			
CLIENT B			X	X	X
CLIENT C		X			
CLIENT D	X				
CLIENT E		X		X	

What is left are the gaps where a customer hasn't bought, or "windows of opportunity" for you.

The great thing is, at a glance you can look at the clients who have bought a particular product or service, and their reasons why, and you have a ready-made proposal to make that call to the client who hasn't already bought it.

Action point

Grab some paper or a spreadsheet, list your key clients down the side, and your product or service range along the top, tick who has bought what and see if there is a reason to call the clients with the gaps.

3. The right way to start to "pitch" your product or service

If take nothing else from this report today, please write this down

Ask questions!

In sales we call it qualifying, in a Dr's surgery it is part of the diagnosis process

The number of times I have been at the receiving end of a sales pitch where the salesperson has launched into how fantastic they are, and their service is awesome, and it includes this, this, and this, and if you do this, we can do that, and many of our clients do this, and da da da da da – it's like they just can't wait to tell you everything that's on their website...

...and some of them have got big websites!

Apart from leaving you with brain fade, they have missed the big opportunity when talking to you – **to actually find out what it is that you want!!**

Now if you find out what your client wants, and it happens to be something that you offer, the sale is much more straight-forward – why make it hard on yourself?

Let's look at a hypothetical example, going back to our imaginary doctor

A guy walks in to the Dr with a pounding headache and sits down – the Dr smiles, has good eye contact, nice reflective body language – so far so good, and then he says with all the enthusiasm he can find...

“wow !! Great to see you I have these fabulous new pills, they will stop your feet aching, and you only have to take one a day, if you take one with water they taste like strawberries, and they come in a really handy little box that you can keep in your pocket, and they’re made by the biggest pharmaceutical company in the world – would you like some?”

Now we’ve all been “sold” to like that in the past I’m sure (not at the Dr’s!)

And the thing is when the guy says “no” and runs out of the room, the Dr can’t understand it, he thinks well I mentioned all these fabulous things...

...what a timewaster!

Now let’s look at the scenario again, if the Dr just asks a few questions.

“What is troubling you?”

I have a headache

“Have you had any recent head injuries?”

No

“Tell me any other symptoms?”

Flashing zig zag lines in my eyes

So now the Dr recaps, confirming the details with the patient and diagnoses a migraine

“You have an ocular migraine, we have these migraine tablets that are clinically proven to work and relieve the symptoms of your type of ocular migraine, would you like some?”

I think you will agree the answer from the patient would be a little different, because the Dr took time to understand his problem, and using his knowledge offer the medication that would match the needs of the patient.

For the avoidance of doubt. Clearly this is just to highlight the use of questioning to find out the real need, and not intended to be in any way to show how a Dr works, or offer medical advice!

Action point

Make a conscious decision to ask your next three clients or potential clients what they are looking for?

4. What are you really selling?

Not many people wake up one day and say “I would **LOVE** a compliance report” – but they do go to bed at night wishing that they had piece of mind

So if you are selling Health and Safety compliance reports – explain **how** that can give them piece of mind

Not many people wake up and say “I would **LOVE TO PAY** someone to recruit for me”

But they may go to bed at night thinking:

How am I going to organise my recruitment marketing?

What am I allowed to say?

Where am I going to get the time for all of the CV reading, and initial interviews?

So in recruitment, often you are selling again piece of mind, and time

Action point

Think about your own business and what you are really selling, and include this in your marketing, meetings and networking presentations

5. Features – Advantages – Benefits and why benefits sell

List your products and services, and think of the main benefit to your customer. Put yourself in your customers shoes, or simply see if you can answer it with a “so what” If you can answer with “so what” it is probably a feature or an advantage. If you can’t say “so what” then you have probably identified the benefit.

For example:

A wellington boot

FEATURE	ADVANTAGE	BENEFIT
Made of rubber	Waterproof	Keeps your feet dry

Radio advertising Feature

FEATURE	ADVANTAGE	BENEFIT
Talks to people at the right time	Commercials can be timed when people are thinking about a particular activity EG Thursday, Friday, Saturday for a shopping promotion	You are reaching people when they are most likely to be in a position to purchase

Benefits answer needs and desires – BENEFITS SELL!

This can really help you condense your proposal, don't go into detail about your product or features, instead focus on and explain the benefit, and if your client is interested, *then* show how that is achieved.

Key Point

If you can relate the benefits of your service or product, to your customers qualified needs, and then explain how they are achieved using features and advantages you have a really strong sales case

Action point

List the top three benefits of using your product or service, (remember to check if it passes the “so what?” test), and then talk about these to your potential clients

6. Overcoming “objections”

What an awful word! **“OBJECTIONS”**

It is a term we use in sales training, and sales management terminology when somebody dares to raise a reason for not wanting to buy

I like to treat them as... (another piece of jargon) a “buying signal”

If you do this you will welcome “objections”, rather than fearing them

So if you receive an objection, the best thing to do is to start a mini qualification process again

For example

“I can’t afford this car”

We have covered that the car fulfils all of your needs

“yes”

So if we can spread the payments, over a number of months would you like to buy it?

(Note: There are regulations on the sale of financial products, so do please check the correct process, if you are in this situation)

“Yes” or “No” If “No” then further qualification is required, – perhaps a less expensive car would be suitable, or the customer wanted more money for their part exchange.

We are not trying to sell people something they don’t want, or need, but if there are objections then there is more qualifying to do

Action point

Think about, and list the top five regular objections you get to your service or product, and then brainstorm how you may be able to overcome them to gain more sales – your answers can be added into your presentation of benefits, thereby overcoming “objections” before they arise

7. Recognise those buying signals

Buying signals can be well disguised, and you may be so focused on selling your product, that you are not looking for them. Always try to look for buying signals.

Questions are often buying signals. For example

“What is the price?”

“What is the delivery time?”

“Does it come in any other colour?”

Or a statement could be a buying signal. For Example

“That sounds like a great idea”

“That would be perfect”

“That sounds just what we are looking for”

Some sales people will be so keen to tell you their pre-prepared presentation, it’s almost as though they are disappointed if you show interest too soon! They can then continue on, oblivious to your interest, and potentially lose the sale.

Action point

Look out for buying signals and next time you think you have one – ask a “test close” (completion) question

8. Test close, and close

More jargon, as nobody wants to be “closed” but this is simply the completion of the sale

This is one of the most feared parts of a sale, even by many experienced sales people

Think about phrases you can use to complete the sale

If your product or service’s **benefits** meets the customers **qualified needs**, and **desires** they should be ready to buy!

So ask for the business!

The most effective completion I have found over the years is

“Would you like to go ahead”

Or if you don’t want to be so assumptive you can use a “test close”

For example “If I can will you”

“If I can arrange a delivery date next week, would you like to go ahead?”

“If I can offer it for the price you are looking to achieve, shall we go ahead?”

If the answer is NO, then there are further objections, so qualify these, and overcome them if you can, then move to “test close” again

You have done a lot of work to get to this point so please do ask for the business.

Imagine a footballer who has spent years training, is running up the pitch, uses his skill to tackle a ball, skilfully manoeuvres around the defence, and then gets to the goal and just stops!

...they'd take him away!

Action point

Simply ask for the business

9. Always be honest and pleasant, and ask for testimonials, and always treat people how you would like to be treated

One of the features of the social media age, is that people can very quickly let others know if they have had great or poor service

The thing is, if you are honest and do a great job, or have a fantastic product you can ask for testimonials. People are very keen to see others have had a good or great experience, if you ask for, and build a file of testimonials, not only can you use these in your marketing (with permission), but also in your selling, when dealing with clients with similar needs. They can be really powerful ways of highlighting to a potential client that what you are saying is true.

Action point

Ask three of your existing clients for a testimonial, and use it

10. Follow up

Despite 30 years of sales and marketing experience, and all of the advice and methods I have spoken about already. When I worked for a local artist in a freelance business development role to gain new retail accounts for him I didn't always get the "sale" first time. However I opened 46% of the total new accounts for him by following up.

It is something that most salespeople do not do, mainly in my experience due to a fear of rejection, or not enough time! The great news is that also in my experience, this applies to most, if not all of your competitors too!

Please take the time to follow up on interested potential clients who have maybe said, “it’s not the right time” – “I need to speak to my business partner” – “I will get back to you” etc

These people are far more likely than “cold prospects” (who don’t know you), to buy from you. So dig out your file and give them a call. There may be many reasons why they didn’t buy the first time, please do try it.

Action point

Follow up the three potential clients who have the most likely need for your product or service

11. Be persistent but not pushy

Even if after all of this, and your follow up, your customer still hasn’t bought from you then (as long as your service or product is right) be persistent - but not pushy! – If they are on your mailing list, then you can keep them up to date, but if not, always remember them for a new product launch or an exciting announcement. Even better, if you have a specific new service or product that can help them with something they mentioned in your qualification. Or why not ask them for their opinions when developing a new service. There are many ways to keep in contact, and keep your name at the forefront of your prospective buyers mind – but in a non-pushy way – watch a four year old ask for an ice cream, and learn about persistence

Action point

Choose three potential clients who haven’t bought from you, and make contact. Think of a reason to call, your objective, and why they should want to hear from you

That’s it, 11 great ways to improve your sales

I can offer a 100% guarantee that these will not work...

...if you don’t apply them!

Ideas and techniques are like bananas. They are fabulous and nourishing, but if you leave them on the shelf they will go off quickly, and then you simply won’t want them! So every time you eat, or see a banana, why not think back to this report, and take some **action** to move your business forward.

So please use some of these methods and ideas over the next 30 days. I would love to hear about your successes or challenges, so please don't forget to drop me a line, thank you. chris@cpcsalesandmarketingtraining.co.uk

Thank you for reading this report, I wish you every success with your sales

Until next time, best wishes

Chris

Disclaimer: Please ensure that your activities comply with current legislation, and remember that these ideas will not work if they are not tried. Please use your judgement as to whether these methods are suitable in your particular business, as we will not be responsible for any loss caused due to inappropriate actions.

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