

Increase your sales

1. Target specific markets where you have a niche. Even though everyone could be interested in your product and therefore be a potential buyer, it may be better to concentrate all of your marketing efforts on prospects where they have a greater need for what you have to offer. That is, spend time on identifying a niche market, rather than a "shot gun type" approach hoping that you will promote to everyone and that some sales will result from it.
2. Never advertise without an offer. If you want to get attention include an offer that is so powerful that it can't avoid attracting customers' interest.
3. Promote your own USP (unique selling proposition) – eg Woolworths "the Fresh Food People". This is the main reason that compels a prospect to buy off you and so you need to promote it.
4. Make sure you get full access to all the data that will help you in any aspect of generating and closing the sale.
5. Diversify into other areas. As we have already mentioned, it is less expensive to get more business from existing customers who are satisfied than to try and find new customers. One of the ways in which existing customers can be given added value or buy more from you is to diversify into other products that will also be of interest to them. Remember if they are happy with the first offerings that you have given them; then they are certainly going to be willing to consider what else you've got to put before them.
6. Never stop testing. Always keep evaluating how you're going as far as the reaction to your product is concerned and keep in touch with customers to make sure that they are satisfied all the time. Continual research and promotion is required if you are to win. An effective 80/20 guideline is to invest 80% of your advertising budget and effort in proven promotions and 20% in testing new variations. Most businesses that use this system continue to grow even when the market is very competitive. Keep evaluating how you are going so that you are able to make changes to beat the competition.
7. Remove all risks. You will need to remove as many risks as possible. The reason why people don't buy something they want or need is because they don't want to take the chance of getting something different than they expect. You can help them eliminate this dilemma by ensuring that everything you supply to them is with a guaranteed satisfaction, money back type guarantee.

Persistence works

Nothing succeeds like persistence. The business that persists in following up its leads will eventually win out if they don't give up.

Many customers request literature or samples to be sent to them and companies fall down if they don't follow through those requests as quickly as they should. Often if there is no response from the customer who has had the literature or samples sent out to them, the business or the sales people give up.



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If a customer requests product literature or samples, then in general, they have an interest in making a purchase. However, they may not want to make the purchase immediately and so there is a necessity for the salesperson to continue follow-up until such time as the customer chooses to buy.

What happens is the customer may not have an immediate need, but two or three months later their priorities shift and suddenly the product that they were thinking about buying becomes a product that they need right now. By this time however, that literature or sample that was sent out has been lost or buried at the bottom of the cupboard, or even thrown out during the normal office clean up. If that happens, who do you think is likely to get the sale?

Assuming that there are several competitors in that field, all selling similar products, but at varying prices, then the successful business will be that which continues to keep their name before the customer until he or she makes the decision to buy. If the salesperson followed-up the customer, then the name of that business would be the most familiar one and once the prospect is ready, the order will go to that firm.

The important lesson to be learned is that the sales team within a business must keep positioning their company to win those delayed sales by following up regularly for at least six months on all qualified sales leads.

The procedure is as simple as the salesperson starting for the first four weeks with a follow-up and then once a month after that. The follow-up doesn't have to be costly because it can either be a quick telephone call or a short letter just indicating that they are there to assist them when and if the customer is ready.

How to stimulate sales

There are three main ways that you can stimulate sales and these are:

1. Personal selling.
2. Building sales by advertising and promotion.
3. Stimulating sales through good displays of your product, both in your place of business and outside.

The amount and type of selling effort that needs to be used will vary from business to business and from business owner to business owner. Some businesses will prosper with low-key sales efforts while others (for example, used car lots) thrive on aggressive "hoop-lah" type promotions. In any event, the importance of effective selling cannot be over-emphasised.

Remember, however, that you must never lose sight of your major objective and that is to make a profit. Anyone can produce a large volume of sales, which add up to many dollars, but unless you keep control of your costs and relate that to the income generated, the exercise may well prove to be unprofitable.

Other issues such as the price of your product and its presentation will also be very important.



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There are also three main ways to improve your sales productivity, other than employing other people to do your work:

1. Increase the value of each of your customers.
2. Improve your selling presentation and performance.
3. Work smarter.

It doesn't matter what you do, these three categories will always apply. You can increase the value of your customers by, for example, simply asking for a bigger order when they give the okay to go ahead. If you go into such places as McDonalds and order a Big Mac, staff are trained to ask the question "Would you like fries with that?".

By increasing the per-sale value of each customer you deal with, your sales total could improve quite dramatically. You can improve your selling performance by increasing the prospecting techniques and your selling techniques as well.

Finally, you can work smarter, which really means working better. It does not necessarily apply to working longer hours, just making sure that during working hours you generate the maximum return and efficiency.

Further information

The following fact sheets provide further information on these issues:

- Pricing strategy
- Selling tips