



‘Old School’ Sales Techniques Can Still Reap Benefits

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While it can almost be guaranteed that you will not purchase a vacuum cleaner from a traveling salesman at your front door any time soon, in many businesses traveling sales is still a necessary business function, particularly in the B2B space. Pharmaceutical companies send reps to doctors’ offices, software providers schedule demos of their latest offerings, and the list goes on.

No matter if your business has traveling sales teams or not, there are aspects of that type of sales relationship that should still exist in every business transaction today. Building a relationship with a customer, knowing how to apply your product or service to their lives, these are still essential basics that need to be part of the sales process. The secret to success is to understand how to incorporate “old school” sales tactics into modern sales strategies without dating your approach. Here is how to do it:

Get Chummy

If there is a key decision maker who will be the one to determine if you make a successful sale or not, take the time to get to know that person. Research the individual’s social media presence and find out about previous job positions, educational background, etc. Use this information as a conversation starter. We are all more likely to want to do business with someone we can make a personal connection with versus someone who is standoffish and brusque. Remember even if you seem to have nothing in common getting a conversation started and being a quality listener who asks intriguing questions can be just as impactful as bonding over a shared experience.

Pick Up the Phone

If emails, tweets, direct mailings and other outreach are not working to convert a lead already in the pipeline it may be time to pick up the phone. It used to be the only method of communicating and now phones often just sit on the desk ignored. By making a call you are not only benefitting the lead because it may be the impetus needed to buy and improve business (which also benefits you), you can also find out if the lead is still worth pursuing rather than following up in limbo.

Grab Lunch or Coffee

If your prospect does not have time to fit in an offsite meeting, offer to stop by a local restaurant to pick up to-go orders and bring them to the office with you to save time. If you are located in different areas mail a gift card to a local coffee shop with a note asking to schedule a call over coffee for next week.

Put the Customer First

Rather than starting a conversation with a customer by telling them the marketable features of your product, find out what experience the company has in your businesses field. Have they never used a solution like yours before? Has a competitor already sold them and failed to deliver? By harvesting this information first you can better explain how your business is better, new or unique. If a customer is hesitant to give you information be prepared to provide hypothetical or real examples of companies in a similar business that have faced challenges and used your product or service to overcome them. Let the customer draw parallels from these scenarios to their business.

Leave an Impression

Too often these days sales is a disconnected venture. If there is a large account your company is trying to win simply sending emails, leaving voicemails and mailing service or product backgrounders is not enough. Go the extra mile and travel to the potential customer's office and take any short meeting opportunity you can. If your lead is using a competitor's service offer to do the same work for free for a week or 30 days to show how your solution is superior. Sticking your neck out in a big way will make your company more memorable than another email pinging into an inbox. Even if a customer is interested in buying, an email can sit for days, even weeks, buried under more pressing items on a to do list.

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