Lead Generation: Business to Business

EVERY COMPANY NEEDS TO FIND NEW CLIENTS. IT'S IMPORTANT FOR ALL BUSINESSES, BUT CRITICAL FOR THOSE THAT WORK PRIMARILY WITH OTHER BUSINESSES. YOUR BEST CLIENT MAY BE ACQUIRED BY ANOTHER COMPANY, OR THE OWNER MAY FALL FROM A FJORD IN NORWAY, OR A NEW MANAGER MAY SIMPLY WANT TO BRING IN A KNOWN SUPPLIER.

Things like this happen. In fact, some research says that it's most likely to happen with clients who are *happy* with your work. Really. A satisfied customer can sometimes be snatched away for any number of reasons and then you need either to win back the business or find a new client.

What every business needs is a lead-generation program and Ray Jutkins, who I've mentioned previously, had an entire series of presentations on that topic.

Ray said that nearly 70% of all business-to-business (B2B) marketing action is lead generation. "Of course I'm omitting entirely image, awareness, positioning, and publicity campaigns." He was also including only sales promotion, marketing, direct marketing, and sales efforts in the statistics.

Whether you include those distinctions or not, lead generation is essential. It's important for business-to-consumer (B2C) marketing, too, but not to the same extent. So no matter what product or service you offer, forgetting about lead generation is a serious mistake.

In April (let me know if you need a copy), I included some of Ray's guidelines for lead generation. This is another episode in that series.

How to Generate Leads

Agree on procedures and terms: Involve the sales team in determining what you will do and what you expect. They must understand the plan

What happens to your business if your best client falls off a fjord in Norway?

of attack, the benefits to the company, and the benefits they will receive from the lead generation program.

Ray said "Make it easy for the sales force to make your lead generation program work by including them in the planning process."

Realize that sales people are not paper pushers: Most sales reps are not into doing paper work and particularly not *additional* paper work. If you need the sales team to measure and report, you must sell them on your program.

Selling a plan to the sales team means finding the benefit for them. Ray said, "It can be more commission or it can be a *thing*." What you offer is not nearly as important as giving your sales staff a *reason* to help you measure.

Define the process: If you have a number of sales offices or distribution locations, how you will feed leads to the field needs to be established before the program begins.

Ray said "There are distinct advantages in having leads go directly to the field, but this gives you very little control. There are also advantages in having all leads flow through headquarters, but this slows response."

Neither system is good nor bad. Both options need to be evaluated. And after you've evaluated the options, make a decision in conjunction with the sales team before the program is introduced to your marketplace.

Organize! For your lead generation program to be successful, you must think, plan, and organize it from your prospects' side of the desk. See it as your prospects will see it.

Ray offered 10 primary "Prospect Decision Points" that a *suspect* will pass through before becoming a *prospect* and eventually a *customer*:

1. Does the message delivered by this package, mail piece, ad, website, or exhibit booth look interesting?

2. Does it make me want to get involved with this organization?

3. Is the offer a good value for me and my company?

4. How does this offer compare with their competition?

5. Is it easy to get more information or to place an order with these people?

6. Do I feel that what I order will meet or exceed my expectations?

7. Do I feel like I want to do business with these folks?

8. How should I elect to work with these people – direct, through a rep, over the phone, by e-mail, or through their website?

9. Do continuing contacts made by this firm give me good vibes and a high level of satisfaction?

10. Does this company provide new ideas for me to consider? Do they consider me a friend?

Go for the triumvirate: Readership, involvement, and commitment – you must get all three from your prospect if you expect to reach your lead generation objectives.

You must convince the prospect to read your material. No matter how you deliver it, your message must first be read.

Ray said "Your message must be compelling enough to gain involvement. The prospect must understand your product, your service, and your offer. You want the prospect to do something , so anything less than a commitment means that you have more work to do."

AIDA: This is an idea from the early 1900s, but it still applies today: Attention, Interest, Desire, Action.

If you expect results, you must obtain the *attention* of your prospect. Then you must create *interest* in your offer and your product. Next you stimulate a *desire* to make a move. And finally must must state both a sound reason and an emotional reason to **act now**!

Ray quoted author Ted Morgan: 'If you want to succeed in this world, you don't have to be much more clever than other people; you just have to be one day earlier than most people."

Ray said, "Morgan is absolutely right-on. You must get out in the field and make contact. Phone and mail and e-mail and direct mail are all wonderful. Yet nothing – absolutely nothing – will ever replace one-to-one contact."

"Someone out there is waiting for you to come and accept their order," Ray said. "Go get it." Ω

WordPerfect is not Word and Word is not Perfect

BEFORE MICROSOFT WORD EXISTED, WORDPERFECT WAS KING. A NEW FEATURE IN THE LATEST VERSION MAKES IT A CONTENDER FOR TODAY'S OFFICES.

WordPerfect X7 includes the ability to create editable PDF forms. Word can't do this and you would need to buy Adobe Acrobat to create a form that could be filled in using Adobe Reader. Because Adobe has switched to the rental model, you'll pay $20 per month for Acrobat.

The WordPerfect suite has the usual office suite components, but one feature is unique: The ability to make an editable PDF form. Word can't do this and it's easier than in Adobe Acrobat. Just place the cursor where you want a form element (radio button, check box, drop-down list, text field, multi-line text field), select Insert, PDF Form Controls, and the control type from the menu.

For some control types, such as a drop-down list, you'll need to define the values to be displayed.

Once you've defined all of the fields, choose File, Publish to PDF, and you're done.

Recipients don't need Acrobat to edit the file, just the free Adobe Reader program and that's already installed on most computers. Anyone who needs to create PDF forms, even occasionally will be wowed by this feature.

A home and student version is priced at $100 while the legal version sells for $350 (upgrade $225). The legal version includes WordPerfect, Quattro Pro, Presentations, a table of authorities creator, a notebook application, an e-book

publisher, and Roxio Secure Burn for CDs. The standard version omits PerfectAuthority and sells for $250 (upgrade $160), while a professional version adds the Paradox database manager at $400 (upgrades are $260). Ω