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Developing a Successful Sales Strategy

Developing a successful sales strategy requires careful planning and consistent, thoughtful implementation over time. We'll be documenting several time-tested steps to yield positive results.

*One thing is very clear-
What one focuses on, one gets!*

Start with a vision

Vision is a belief in what we can be. This sounds philosophical, but each successful salesperson must first identify what can be accomplished and why. For example, Milk Products' vision is to be the preferred supplier of baby animal milk replacer and supplement products to feed manufacturers and wholesale distributors by providing the highest quality products and unmatched service. This is quite different from a company whose vision it is to supply many different types of products or lower quality products through varied distribution channels. Our focus and vision helps define who we are, and also who our customers and prospects are.

What is your Driving Force?

In a nutshell, what motivates you to keep selling, even in the face of adversity?

- Is it providing solutions to problems your customers face?
- What about financial reasons or the thrill of a closed sale?

Your driving force should be more than a "me-focused" reason or it will be difficult to see your customer's point of view and get beyond products, to customized solutions for their individual needs. Whatever it is that keeps you motivated, write it down so you can refer back to it when needed.

Develop a Sales Plan

A sales plan will help make you more efficient as a salesperson. A sales plan identifies the "who, what, when and how much" questions so you can develop a plan for each opportunity.

First, identify which category each opportunity falls into:

Client, suspect, or prospect –

- A client is a current customer.
- A suspect is a contact or company that you "suspect" has a need you can fill, but you but haven't determined if there's a fit between their company and yours.
- A prospect is a person or company that needs or wants what you're selling, but you've not sold them yet.

Once identified, ask yourself what you'll do to secure more business and referrals from existing customers, and how will I keep top-of-mind awareness with each group? In the case of suspects, what answers do you need in order to qualify or disqualify them as a prospect?



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Once you've identified what type of opportunities you have, design a plan that contains consistent communication and tasks that can be implemented to support or close the sale of your product or service. These tasks can be developed after understanding the needs, pain, and key selection factors presented during phone conversations and meetings.

Goals, Goals, and More Goals

I'm sure you have sales goals. Most likely they are related to volume, with others tied to profit as well. Sometimes you have input in setting goals, sometimes not. No matter how your goals are developed, it is important to write your goals down, and be sure they are measurable. Goals that are not measurable will waste your time. Your personal goals can and should go beyond sales goals. What personal, financial or educational goals are you working on?

By documenting these in a central location, you are much more likely to incorporate them into your sales strategy and review them regularly.

Keep contact information current

It goes without saying that it is difficult, but important, to keep up with maintaining contact information. Titles, addresses, numbers and people change, but looking for contact information shouldn't be a challenge, and it should be accurate. Adopt a contact management system that allows quick access to contacts, and is easy to synchronize and update. It is equally important to have contact information for not only decision makers, but also influencers and other support staff as well.

Developing a sales strategy seems time-consuming, but how much time is wasted if you're not working from a plan at all? The best salespeople have a strategy for success and work that plan. Your time should be spent developing relationships, creatively solving problems for your customers, and securing new business for your company. If you develop a sales strategy and implement it with consistency, you'll reap sure rewards.