

Six powerful prospecting tips

 By [John Boe](#)

27 Aug 2008

Why is it that some sales reps consistently earn a six-figure annual income while other reps, putting in the same hours, selling the same products and trained by the same sales manager struggle each month financially to make ends meet? The answer to this question is painfully simple: the six-figure sales reps spend more time on the phone and never forget to ask for referrals!



Top producers don't need to be told to ask for referrals or follow up on hot leads, because they understand that prospecting is a necessity and not just an activity. The good news is that prospecting for new business, like any other skill, can be trained and developed into a habit.

Here are six powerful prospecting tips to build your business.

1. Don't forget to ask for referrals

When it comes to asking for referrals, timing is everything. Research indicates that the most effective time to ask for referrals is right after you've made the sale or provided a valuable service for your customer.

Asking for referrals prior to closing the sale is a big mistake and may even jeopardise the sale itself. Once the sale has been completed, your customer will be on an "emotional high" and far more receptive to the idea of providing you referrals.

2. Train and reward your advocates

An advocate is a person who's willing to go out of his or her way to recommend you to a friend or associate. Most customers are initially reluctant to provide referrals without some basic training and motivation.

Once you're given a prospect, it's a good idea to take the time to role-play with your advocate to demonstrate how to approach and talk to their referral. A brief role-playing exercise will build your advocate's confidence and keep them from over educating their referrals. During your role-play session, be sure to prepare your advocate to expect some initial resistance. This training will pay big dividends by making your advocate more effective and less likely to become discouraged when faced with rejection.

Always take the time to thank your advocates and give them feedback on the status of their referrals. I recommend that you call them and then follow up by sending a thank you card and or gift.

3. Strike while the iron is HOT

Prospects, like food in your refrigerator, are perishable and therefore need to be contacted quickly. Each day you let slip by without making initial contact with your referral dramatically reduces the probability of you making the sale. Develop the habit of contacting your referrals within two-business days or sooner.

Have a system to keep track of your referrals so they don't end up falling through the cracks. It's critical to have a computerised client contact management system to record your remarks and track future contacts and appointments. Relying on your memory alone is a very poor business decision that will cost you dearly.

4. Schedule a minimum of two-hours a day for phone calling

Make your phone calls in the morning while you and your referrals are both fresh and alert. Treat your prospecting time with the same respect you would give to any other important appointment. This is not the time to check your emails, play solitaire on the computer, make personal phone calls or chat with your associates.

Avoid the temptation to try and sell your product or service over the phone. Your objective for every phone call is to create interest, gather information and make an appointment. If your prospect asks you a question, get in the habit of going for an appointment rather than giving a quick response.

Don't shoot from the hip; use a script. It's important to use a phone script when you contact your prospect so you don't leave out any key information. It's a good idea to role-play your script over the phone with your sales manager until he or she feels you sound confident and professional.

5. Qualify your prospect at maximum range

Unfortunately, not every prospect will be interested or qualified financially to purchase your products or services. Successful sales reps don't waste time chasing after low-probability prospects and know when it's time to cut their losses and move on.

6. Don't take rejection personally.

Selling, like baseball, is a numbers game, pure and simple. Rejection is to be anticipated as a natural aspect of the qualification process, so don't take it personally. Learn from rejection by using it as a valuable feedback mechanism. Salespeople who take rejection personally lack perseverance and seldom make the sale.

For the majority of salespeople, prospecting for new business is without a doubt the most challenging and stressful aspect of the selling process. Selling is a contact sport and daily prospecting for new business is the key to every salesperson's long-term financial success. By integrating these six powerful prospecting tips into your daily business routine, you'll be able to keep your appointment calendar packed!

ABOUT JOHN BOE

American John Boe presents a wide variety of motivational and sales-oriented keynotes and seminar programs for sales meetings and conventions. John is a recognised sales trainer and business motivational speaker with an impeccable track record in the meeting industry. For more information, go to www.johnboe.com. Free newsletter available on website.

- CRM: It pays to go the extra mile - 3 Nov 2012
- Principles of persuasion - 13 Apr 2012
- Let's shake on it - 12 Mar 2012
- What are you selling? - 5 Mar 2012
- Feedback: Some people can't handle the truth - 27 Feb 2012

[View my profile and articles...](#)

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>