

The Ingredients of a World Class Sales Process

ShopperTrak estimates sales on Black Friday rose by 0.3% to \$10.7Bn relative to last year. Inc 5000 celebrates "3 year sales growth" with this year's winner, Ambit Energy posting a 20,369% increase, 2006 sales were \$1.6m rising to \$325m in 2009! Sales are headline news. They turn great ideas into real businesses. Forget stress testing the Banks, you need to stress test your Sales Process, your life blood.

Here are my favorite ingredients of a world class sales process. These will dramatically improve your success. If nothing else they can act as a little stress test of your own system:

1. You have defined the unique market that you are capable of dominating and the **key words** that describe the business results you achieve.
2. These key words are inside the heads of your prospects and associated with your name. It's not about positioning the product its about positioning the prospect.
(See the classic by Al Ries & Jack Trout) eg Driving = BMW, Search = Google, Innovative Cool Technology = Apple.
3. Your sales & marketing campaigns seek and find your poster child prospects and nurture and landscape the marketplace for your highly trained salesforce.
4. Therefore your sales professionals are taught how precious their time is and where to spend that time.
5. Your process is a distinct set of progressive stages where your suspects are ultimately turned into customers.
6. This process will have many names but contain 4 key elements:
 - Discovery/Assessment/Perspective Phase - suspects are treated with cynicism, politely filtered with insightful questions to ensure money and issues are real
 - Diagnostic/Deal Definition/Pain Point Exploration - the questions become more insightful, there is agreement from both sides to explore the true consequences of the symptoms as presented at the prospects site

- Validation/Usage/Due Diligence - A key phase to test exactly how the prospect will actually **use** your product/service in their business to address the issues discussed
 - Fulfillment/Delivery - This phase must ensure that business results as promised are actually achieved.
7. The CRM system will allow brief but important logging of activity and reports will show whether deals are being progressed and are not lingering.
 8. The CRM system will visualize the farming of clients including the constant adding of new contacts within each client.
 9. Metrics will be measured objectively and consistently and real time updates will allow personal accountability of cookbooks. (a cookbook is a comprehensive set of activities that guarantee success)
 10. Marketing campaigns are an integral part of your sales lead generation machine and marketing ROIs are measured relentlessly no matter how difficult.
 11. Sales collateral focuses on outcomes and business results not just bland specification sheets droning on about features and benefits.
 12. All marketing collateral, web site narratives and speeches will focus on the awareness of key symptoms and their consequences. This will over time help push traffic to you, as people realize their negative present.
 13. It should be possible to see a direct relationship between the vision of the company and the sales scripts being deployed.
 14. The sales process will demand clear next steps with dates at every juncture. This will create the essential environment of mutual respect between buyer & seller.
 15. The sales process will allocate % probability to the key phases allowing weighted forecasts to be created and tested to allow improvements.
 16. Sales scripts will allow prospects to do most of the talking because the questions posed will be open and insightful.
 17. The process will recognize "free consulting" and recognize the need to draw a line in the sand where solutions end.
 18. Especially in this economic environment, the process will bring out the cost of the problem and therefore an ROI will be easy to articulate that the prospect recognizes.
 19. The sales process will recognize the importance of training and mentoring.

20. Referrals will be recognized as precious assets to be sought after and only after results have been delivered.
21. Above all else the process will emphasize that negotiation starts on the first day and is not reserved for the pricing meeting!