

A 7 STEP SALES PROCESS

INTRODUCTION

This guide is not going to drill down into the “hows” of each stage but is about process – getting yourself into the habit of following the same steps every time you engage with a new prospect – and recording the information at each stage. You may have different names for each stage – but the basic flow should be the same in your business. Go ahead and get started!

1. INITIAL CONTACT

How do you find your leads and prospects – how do they find you? Do they call or email you? Make an enquiry on your website? Social media? In all cases- make sure you record their details somewhere – and where they came from (and the date)– that information will be useful when you are planning your marketing. Or – you might contact them, perhaps through tele-marketing? Not continuing? Make a note (and why) – maybe it’s a Not Now – can you add them to your mailing list?

2. QUALIFY

So they have contacted you – now you need to find out more about them and determine if your products or services are a good fit for them. Don’t miss out this stage and launch into full-blown sales ninja mode – it’s important to recognise when there is little chance of an opportunity ending up in a sale – your time is better spent elsewhere. They may be a private customer when you only do B2B, or it might be a sector that you have no experience in, or they may not have the budget (that’s a whole other blog in itself!). It’s also useful to try and work out how serious they are about working with you – let’s try to avoid the tyre-kickers. Make notes and again take note of the date.

3. NEEDS ANALYSIS

Now you need to really drill into their requirements. Have a set of standard questions ready so that you don’t miss anything. It can also make you look professional and help the prospect build their confidence in you. Nail down their reasons why they think you can help them. Avoid offering any solutions at this point. Use your ears at this stage. In your head you are likely now thinking about how your offering can help the prospect – but again you might find at this stage that you are not the right person to be helping them. However, you might find it’s a great opportunity for someone in your network – and you can refer the prospect on to them.

4. PRESENTATION

This is the stage at which you get to talk! This is your chance to demonstrate to the client (and that might be an actual product demonstration!) how your product / service would benefit them. Do always bear in mind that you should not give away all your secrets at this stage – you need to do enough to build trust though. Be prepared to make changes to your assessment of their needs – you can often find that points emerge that you may not have captured during the previous stage.

5. PROPOSAL

The quote or proposal or estimate. Whatever you call it. If you send out a document then make sure it is saved somewhere so you can refer back to it and amend it if necessary. Depending on your business it might also become the invoice. Make a note of when you sent it. What are you going to do next? When are you going to follow up?

6. NEGOTIATION

Again – I'm not going to go into the "how" of negotiation! This is the stage where you may have to adjust your proposal in the light of the prospect's needs or wishes. You might have given a couple of alternatives in the proposal – now is the time to nail down which option the prospect is going to take and ensure that they understand the differences and what it will mean for them. This will also be the time to get contracts or agreements ready, and make sure the client (hopefully) understands things like service levels, payment terms and things like delivery lead times and cancellation policies. Do not expose yourself to the risk of delivering your service, sending an invoice and then having a row over credit terms. If you need a Purchase Order from them so you can put the number on the invoice then now is the time to get that! You should not really lose too many at this stage but **** happens and people can drop out at this stage – sometimes a key individual leaves the organisation or for some reason they don't have the budget, but hopefully they will turn into a "not now" not a no. Keep them on file and ask if you can follow up. You may also do a credit check at this point – and you may decide YOU don't want to continue the relationship.

7. CLOSE SALE/DELIVER

And now they are a client! Now you can deliver your products or services – make a note of the final close date.

And don't forget, depending on what you do you might start again at stage 4,5 or 6 with a different / new product for the same customer!

AND FINALLY..

At every stage make a note – if they drop out then make sure you try to find out why – and, if appropriate make a note of when it might be the right time to make contact

Why record dates? So you can start to see how long it takes to close a sale. You can then start to understand how your sales process affects cashflow.

Make a note of how many drop out at each stage – then you will know a) how many you need to get into your pipeline at the beginning of the process. You can also identify at what stage prospects are dropping out. Why is that? What does that tell you about your qualification process?

Contact us for more information on building a world-class sales process.