

51 ways to shaft your competitors

I'd like to share with you some experiences I've had with all kinds of sales processes.

I learned them all the hard way – by getting paid on results. So I thought they might strike a chord with you because they have literally come from the 'school of hard knocks'.

If they didn't work, I didn't eat. Literally.

So here goes. It all boils down to this:

How do you get more leads - and more sales – without spending more than you are now? Or without doing anything differently?

There are, I've found, 51 ways to instantly improve your sales process and find additional revenue – without doing anything too radical or costly.

Here are the first 10 - any firm can easily apply them to quickly lift sales.

You'll notice none of them are hard to do – but that's the whole point: they are easy to implement, but how many of them are you using?

And there lies the rub of it. In most businesses, the urgent takes precedence over the important. Odd really, because there is nothing more important in business than sales.

Any firm - any firm at all - could easily use all of the 51 ways. Trouble is, finding time to do this, however, is a different matter. So I'd like to do it for you.

If the points below make sense to you, let's talk. If not, don't worry, the other 41 will be with you shortly.

Ten simple ways to instantly increase sales. And they really are simple...

1. Help prospects - don't sell to them.

When you try and sell something – and I don't care what it is – you always encounter a natural resistance. It is inbuilt in all of us, from an early age.

But try and help someone and they listen for a split second. This isn't out of the kindness of their heart, it is because there is something in it *for them*.

So have a look at your emails, sales letters, brochures and site and ask yourself this: *if I was a prospect, does this give me information I'd like to know?* Something to make my life easier or more successful?

Or does it just look good, stuffed full of corporate fluff and have no substance? Be honest.

2. Keep in touch – by being *helpful*.

This expands on the first point. No one has the time – or the will – to read corporate propaganda about your company.

But they will make the time to learn about how your products or services can *help them*. As you are reading this now, you'll take my point. So every time you write, or email a prospect, have a good reason to speak to them. And when I say good reason, I mean be helpful.

Just by staying in touch more often than your competitors gives you a huge advantage because the strongest law in marketing is this: people buy when it suits them, not when it suits you.

3. Give a guarantee.

An easy way to lift sales is by limiting the risk for your prospects. Look at how you sell and ask yourself where you can make guarantees. *Less risk for prospects means more business for you.*

Let me give you an example. When I manage a pay-per-click campaign, I bill clients for half the savings I find. This guarantees I'll find improvements because if I can't, I can't bill them anything.

Say a client's conversion costs are £20 each, and I get it them down to £10 each, I bill them £5 per conversion, over an agreed date range.

(Now, if I can reduce the conversion costs and increase the volume, every is very happy – especially the client).

So be creative - it doesn't matter what you sell. Write a list of things you could do to make it easier for your prospects to choose you and crowbar them in to your sales process. Guarantees give you instant credibility, and your prospects less risk. This means more sales for you. It's that simple.

4. Your brochure – an ego trip?

Does your brochure mention your company name, or the word 'we'? If it does, re-write it. Your prospects are only interested in what you can do *for them*. They won't be interested in *you* until they are thinking about buying from you.

So read your brochure. Would it stand up as sales letter or sales pitch? Does it talk about your prospect, or you?

Here's the acid test. Would you say some of the things in your brochure if you were face-to-face with a prospect? No? Why not? Is it because, truth be told, it's full of corporate fluff?

5. Test different sales letters and emails.

How many different sales letters or emails do you have for a product or service? If it is just one, you are missing a trick.

Letters and emails are just like sales pitches: nobody knows how well a particular approach will work till they've tried a few.

I've seen well written sale letters triple response rates and doubled sales. Not bad going for doing no more than sending out a different letter.

But what I've found is most people just use a letter or email a colleague wrote years ago to avoid the hassle of having to write a new one. This is a huge mistake.

A letter with a different slant, or offer could make all the difference (and of course with emails, it's so easy to track and know what's working and what's not).

Just keep testing and keep trying – and when you have a winner make sure every prospect you have gets a copy the second they enquire.

6. Know your appointment and conversion rates.

Quite simply, if you know how many appointments you need to make a sale, and you know how many letters/phone calls you need to make to get an appointment, you are in a very strong position. ***You know exactly what you have to do to hit target.***

It's not rocket science. But so few firms understand this very basic principle. You all have sales targets. So how much better would it be at your next sales meeting to tell everyone exactly what needs to happen: how many appointments you need - and how much marketing spend or activity you need to get those.

7. Your best prospects.

So many firms focus on finding new prospects. They are important – but few realize how much easier it is to sell to the people who have already said they are half interested.

Just because they haven't bought yet, doesn't mean they are not interested.

Keep them warm with relevant, helpful communications, not ones dashed out in ten minutes. They are your second best prospects. If anything, use your time and budget on them – not on finding new ones.

(Who are your best prospects? Existing customers.)

8. Make it easy for prospects to 'raise their hand'

Whenever you send out any mailing you always reach people who are interested - but don't do anything. They have every intention of replying - but later. But the trouble is, later, is never.

So it is your job to make replying 'friction free'. Make it ridiculously easy to do so.

How can you do this? There are many ways.

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One trick I use - and works wonders for clients too – is just to ask them to 'hit reply – no need to write anything – just send a blank email'.

One click and they are done. It's friction free. They don't have to think what to say and it takes a second.

So be creative. Think about your prospects and remove as much friction as possible between you and them. I can't emphasise how important this is.

9. Your website – what is it supposed to do – and how?

Is your web site pulling its weight? If it's not a profit centre on its own you've got problems. Make it justify itself in terms of profit. And of course, the same rules apply here as they do for your brochure. You have to make sure your web site stands up as sales pitch on its own and not just another corporate ego trip.

Don't forget, at this stage in the sales cycle, people are not interested in you – only what you can do for them.

10. Ask clients for testimonials

Testimonials remove doubt. Every business has *some* happy customers.

So make sure you tap into your customers' goodwill. Remove as much doubt – and risk – for your prospects by peppering your brochure, web site and sales letters with testimonials that reinforce your promise.

Now, be honest. How many of these ten points are you putting to good use? If you are not using all of them, you are missing out on some easy sales – and don't forget there are 41 more proven way like this that instantly increase sales.

If you'd like to apply them but can't find the time (like most clients) do give me a call or drop me a mail: it doesn't matter what you do – these dusty old direct marketing principles are universal. They work.

The next ten will be with you shortly...

If what I've said so far makes sense, but you're wondering how you are going to get all that done and implement it all, now is the time to mail me.

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Best

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