

**Everyone's a salesperson**

Your best salespeople aren't necessarily your salespeople. In fact, anyone can be a salesperson or at least spread the message about what your business has to offer. To take a very simple example, what happens if a potential customer winds up speaking to someone in IT support? That person should at least be able to point them in the right direction. To this end, everyone in your business should know what the Academy offers and what the business's key messages are. Everyone identify opportunities and knows what to do if they spot one. Not all great sales ideas come from salespeople.

Energise them

Create physical energy and excitement in the place they work. Apart from at the very top end, salespeople thrive on buzz and there is nothing worse than a sales department that has the vibe of an accounts department. You want people jumping up when they've completed a deal and you want chatter going on at all times. People feed on the atmosphere around them and it helps them to give good phone.

Reward them

It's very important to be relentless with rewards for excellent execution.

Goals to be known ahead

They must know what is outstanding, what is very good, what average is and what is poor - and it can often be as simple as a whiteboard with targets on it.

Make targets realistic

Sit down with the team and agree realistic targets based on what both parties think are achievable

Using a variety of approaches

Ask existing prospects for referrals: there is nothing like the dropping of a name known to both parties to break the ice. You may also want to use direct mail, telemarketing or even partners with businesses who are after the same target but with whom *there is no conflict of interest*. Exhibiting and or sponsoring events that your prospects are likely to attend can work well too.

Get it write

Everyone agrees on this. Nothing puts off a prospective client more than a simple error that has been overlooked. Normally it is a spelling mistake. However, a simple transposed i or e can undo the good work of a dozen hard phone calls. Create a culture where people proofread each others' letters. A series of ready-made templates could be set up.

Do your presentations represent you?

Take a look at your presentations. Are they well designed pieces of communication - or are they covered in old logos and 071 phone numbers? Have they been designed professionally or just evolved ad hoc over the years? What do they say about your brand? Even the best salespeople need good tools.

Check the chemistry

Not everyone gets on with everyone else. This is as true of salespeople and customers as it is in other areas, people are good at different things: some people may be great at cold calling and opening accounts; but they may not be the best to necessarily maintain these relationships. Sometimes you might actually want to work contrary to this. If, say, a negotiation isn't really going anywhere or a relationship is going flat, you may want to send someone more abrasive or challenging in to stir things up a little.

Make them talk to people who matter

Salespeople should speak to the decision maker." Salespeople, especially newer ones, tend to call one level down as they think it's an easier call. The decision maker is often a far nicer person than those below him or her and as they have the authority will often say "bugger it, where do I sign". So do some researches find out who this person is, then call them.

Encourage feedback

Channels should be provided for your customers to tell you how they feel about your products or service, whether it is through your website, your salespeople or face to face. But you should be careful about how you interpret this. Bear in mind that happy customers usually don't give you much feedback - the vast majority comes from the dissatisfied. So while you should always respond, especially to those who are unhappy, you should think twice about changing an offering that has a silent satisfied majority. As for positive feedback: well that's great, you should use it as a testimonial.

Understand your target market

Make sure your product or service gives them a significant number of benefits, and show them the return on investment which must be believable." It's not rocket science, but you have to make this very obvious - and if it isn't you probably need to look at reworking your offering. "Look at your product or service through your prospect's eyes". Get a focused database of clients too: cover too many, and you waste time.

Appearance

A poor personal appearance is to a person what a misspelled word is to a letter: it makes a very, very bad impression indeed. This person is representing PSA and their shoes are scuffed, their jacket has shiny patches and the thin end of the tie is too long - what does that say about your brand? But bad clothes, bad hairstyles and bad facial hair make your business look like a bad company. You should make it clear to people who **visit clients** that appropriate standards of appearance are expected.

Tell them to listen

The fact is that selling has little to do with persuasion - especially if it's aggressive - as people rarely change their minds. Successful selling requires a much more measured approach if it is to be successful. Salespeople should start by standing back and listen from the outset so they can find out what it is that their customers really want:

- 1. what problems they have**
- 2. What solutions they need.**
- 3. Show empathy.**
- 4. Understand what turns them on, and then work on how you can deliver that.**

Train them

Our sales and marketing people all do a basic technology training, keep ourselves current market trends. This is crucial - there is nothing worse than a customer talking to a salesperson who knows absolutely nothing about what they're selling.

Talk it over

We need to hold meetings, perhaps monthly, to work out what went right and what went wrong. In this instance it might be a good idea to take case studies, say, a deal that was very successful and one that was a disappointment. Analyse both cases and look for lessons that can be learned. Encourage your people to work as a team and share their experiences and tips. Also salespeople can be pretty cagey and jealously guard their prospects and techniques. Encourage a culture of openness where people share and ask for advice.