



Why Your Standard Sales Process May No Longer Be Effective

By Brian Shannon

News Flash: Your prospective buyers are smarter than they used to be. Well, at least it seems that way. With the advent of the internet, they can now educate themselves on your company and your competition very easily. Do not kid yourself, savvy buyers are going onto Google and Yahoo before meeting with you. The days are over where you come into an introductory meeting and impress them with your one-of-a-kind business model.

So, what can you do to counter-act the advanced knowledge the prospective customer likely has?

Tip #1: Understand that your prospect knows more about your business than you give them credit for.

Tip #2: Your buyer is tired of the standard sales process that you are using.

Buyers today want to feel good about buying something, as opposed to being sold something. You should start focusing on things like building rapport, asking great questions and speaking candidly with the potential customer. While some of these skills may already be on your radar screen, I would offer that you are focused more on which “step” you are in the sales process versus developing areas of connection with the buyer. Once you open your meeting well, get right to the bottom line of what your presentation is all about. Speak to what your objective is, what the top reason(s) the buyer would benefit and also try to quantify what that value might mean to them. You can do all of this in five minutes if you really focus. Then, stop your presentation and ask them what they think? Their feedback at this point is very revealing. If they are interested, they will want you to explain more of the details. If they are not, then you should also be able to interpret that quickly and really determine if this meeting is worth everyone’s time.

In sales it is not simply a numbers game. You need to be more strategic than that. You need to meet with lots of prospects *who are also qualified buyers*. If your prospects are not qualified, then you likely will not make your annual goal.

This lack of a sales process is likely a departure from your existing methods. And, my ideas will not work all the time. However, before you reject my suggestions, give them a try on your next ten prospects. Then, measure your effectiveness at that time. You may not generate any more sales immediately, but you will likely spend less time with folks who are not real buyers of your product/service. Worst case scenario, your audience will appreciate the fact that you are different than the last ten sales reps they met with.