

Destinations & Drivers

How to move clients down the path that leads to “Yes”

We are always asking sales professionals, “What is sales?” The answer we hear most often is: “Sales is a numbers game.” True. Undisputable. Sales is a numbers game, but it doesn’t have to be the lottery. You can reduce the role of chance in sales by always knowing at which destination your potential clients are in the sales cycle. A destination measures the progress towards that individual becoming a client and dictates what your next course of action will be. Some potential destinations are: (explanations to follow)

- Suspect
- Prospect
- S.M.A.R.T. Prospect
- Proposal Prospect
- Client

Moving potential clients from destination to destination means moving them in your mind from Suspect through Client. Along the way, you are always looking for opportunities to create an Ambassador (refer to July’s article) for your company.

You will win more business by knowing at which destination potential clients are waiting for you, and by knowing which drivers to employ to get them to the next destination, and the next, and ultimately driving them to become your clients.

What are drivers? Drivers are tools that all salespeople use to help them close deals: the glossy brochure, the new Web site, the CD ROM with the Flash presentation, the slick, double-sided business card, the PowerPoint presentation, etc. They all work. Deals are closed every day because, all things being equal, company X had better presentation collaterals than company Y. The danger here is that some salespeople and sales cultures operate under the mistaken belief that they must always possess the perfect driver. Their marketing departments are in an endless cycle of producing and reproducing their brochures, writing and rewriting their content, designing and redesigning their look. This typically is an unnecessary expense of money and time. And while it’s true that you can close deals using these drivers, you can only enroll (refer to June’s article) clients by moving them from destination to destina-

tion, making believers of them each step of the way.

Think about it for a second. You could call a potential client: a suspect, anyone with a pulse, someone you don’t know and who doesn’t know you. Like many of your clients, they buy your product or service off of your brochure, catalog or Web site. “The timing is perfect,” they tell you. “It’s a numbers game,” you say to yourself. “Cashing checks, baby,” you gloat. Not so fast. You



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know nothing about the bigger picture into which the solution you just sold fits – and they know next to nothing about all of the myriad of ways that your company can help them over the long run. You found a need and closed a deal. But in order to close another deal with that client, you’ll have to find another need, and close another deal, and find another need, and close another deal... until they find someone with the same solution for cheaper – or until someone comes along and enrolls them.

There is a mental process for enrolling clients, for moving them from destination to destination. Great sales people use it and employ their drivers only to aid in moving the enrollment process to the next destination, showing the PowerPoint capabilities presentation at the right time in the process in front of the client audience that can recommend them to the next level of decision maker. This is driving from destination to destination. Now here is the key: drivers

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should be designed to avoid the “no,” not necessarily generate a “yes.” Less is more on the drivers. If clients think they know enough to make a decision, you lose the opportunity to enroll them.

Now consider this scenario: You meet or find out about someone previously unknown to you. He is a Suspect: you suspect he might need what you sell. You reach out to him by sending an e-mail, mailing a brochure, shooting a link to your site, talking to him at a networking event or by calling him (you are a driver, too) – and he shows interest. You have just driven him to the next destination, from Suspect to Prospect.

Now he is interested in what you do, but is as uneducated about your company as you are about his. So you take time to learn about his company, and teach him about yours. You learn what his S.M.A.R.T. outcomes are for his business or project. You discover his S.M.A.R.T. goals, which are his Specific, Measurable, Attainable goals that you can Record, and you learn the Timeframe in which the goals need to be met. Only then are you in a position to submit a proposal and enroll him as a client.

Taking a potential client through this process assures that when you submit your proposal (driving him from S.M.A.R.T. Prospect to Proposal Prospect) you are proposing to meet the immediate need, within the context of the bigger picture that you now know – and he knows that you know it. This entire process can happen in 30 minutes, or over the course of three months, but it must happen in this order. When you drive potential clients from destination to destination, there is a much better “chance” that the ultimate destination will be “Yes.”

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