

THE HOT SHEET

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Edition 114

THEY'LL SEE YOU – BUT WILL THEY REMEMBER YOU?

NEWS & LINKS

Recently, I was talking to a salesperson who explained to me that his biggest problem was not getting initial appointments – he got plenty – but getting follow-up appointments. Seems that many of his customers didn't remember him when he called back. Of course, he should have been scheduling the second appointment at the end of the first appointment, but that's another story.

I wasn't surprised to hear his tale of woe. I've done studies before on this very topic, and I've discovered that, in a call back 3-4 days after an initial appointment, even top sales reps didn't have "memory recognition" 25% of the time; that is, 1 out of every 4 prospects they saw couldn't remember their name if asked. For average reps, it was even worse; only 50-60% of their prospects remembered them by name. Why is this? It's simple. Salespeople tend to fall into "monkey see, monkey do" habits, and thus all seem the same to prospects. Part of it is motivated by fear (they're scared to try anything notable or distinctive) and part by laziness (they don't feel like going the extra mile). For those of you who are willing to get past these two demotivators, here is a quick list of 5 ways to be memorable:

Handwritten follow up communication is always memorable. In today's world, e-mails, form letters, and the like are just too easy, and end up sounding and looking the same. Since it's even possible to scan a signature and print it, even a printed letter lacks the personal touch.

On the same note, **Quality personal stationery** seems to be a relic of the past. It's impossible to deny the personal aspect of a handwritten follow up note (get beyond the trite "thank you" note) on QUALITY stationery. Get beyond the too-easy route of company provided letterhead, and invest \$100 in yourself. Buy some quality custom stationery designed for handwritten communication, and communicate with class.

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How about **Answering phone calls after hours?** I'm always amazed at salespeople who "shut it off" after 5 PM. Here's a clue – when you're willing to take a call from a client at 6:30, you show that you care. Customers like people who care.

Personal dress can be another way to set yourself apart. In today's world, customers are always getting called on by people in company-monogrammed oxford shirts, no ties, and khakis – classic business casual. Not to offend the monogrammed shirt people, but why not go back to the faithful jacket and tie? Believe it or not, there's a lot of ground, sartorially, between a banker's suit and business casual. Dressing professionally suggests a higher level of professionalism. Try it. It works.

Great pre-call research is memorable, too. Get beyond the normal "I know what you do, and I know your company's mission statement" stuff. Find an article on your prospect, print out the picture, and ask for their autograph! That's not only memorable, it's fun, and if you're having a good time selling, there's a high likelihood that your customer will have a good time buying.

I would note this: Some salespeople think that being memorable is about wearing silly clothes, telling jokes, or other cheap tactics. It's not. Being memorable is about going the extra mile (for real, not just in empty words), and about not being afraid to step outside the industry norms, while staying professional. Try it – you'll like it!

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THE HOT QUESTION:

I am struggling with a junior sales person who, like many folks new to sales, will think too early in their career that they know everything . He consistently blames his failure on the actions of someone else. You know the old "They stole my prospect" "I should have received that lead" "No one ever comes to me with easy opportunities" excuses. This individual is unwilling to really analyze what he is or is not doing in the sales process to determine what he can do better, nor is he willing to listen. Instead, he consistently worries about the leads that someone else receives over him, or the opportunities another sales person will make for themselves. I have counseled this person on numerous occasions, always getting back to "Let's look at what you are doing," and of course there is no ownership. Is there any turning this person around? This is a common mistake, I know, with folks new to sales. What is the best way to coach someone who is in this cycle? S.H., Kansas City, MO

My first response is to say that you're dealing with a lack of personal accountability, which is a personality trait that isn't limited to new salespeople or old salespeople. It's difficult to

coach out of that, which sounds a lot like what you're seeing with this person. If they're not willing to "own" their own efforts and their own results, I'm not sure what you can do. If a salesperson isn't getting it done AND isn't coachable, I'd probably look to replace them.

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