Employees' Sales Obligation

12 May 2015

Everyone in an organization is responsible for promoting sales just as everyone is responsible for avoiding sloppy work, which discourages future client participation with your company. That is, sales is an obligation for all staff, not an afterthought. First and foremost, the best sales promotion is to do your job well so that the client will feel good about its experience with your company and come back to your firm, or recommend your company to others. Often, it is that special, selfless, thought towards clients that excites them about the service they have received.

Especially employees who are face-to-face representative of the company – delivery people, counter-sales people, customer-service agents, etc. – must feel this responsibility more acutely than will most other company staff members. But all staff members are so obligated to think of where their pay-cheques actually come from – the clients.

Here is what you can do:

1. **Do your job well**
   As stated above, your first sales initiative is towards ensuring that you do your job well. Not only must you take pride in the job you perform, you must secretly covet having a compliment from the client, and make sure no stone is left unturned to create that opportunity for a compliment. Some basics are:
   - Never push the client. Ask or suggest, and be willing to create the option for an easy 'no' by the client.
   - Be proactive with your suggestions. Instead of "Would you like some information?" say, "Here's a brochure on cake icings. Is this the kind of information you are seeking?"
   - Do not assume you are bothering the client, by asking. This is never so if you ask in a caring way, with a caring tone of voice; in most cases it will be seen as helpful.

2. **Look for ways to help**
   The expression on the client's face says it all. If that expression is not calm, you need to be proactive, to get involved, i.e., to help the client. "I sense a concerned look. Do you have a question?" If you feel you might know what the concern is about, then it is better to suggest it directly: "If you are concerned about why we are moving the location, it is because……" Even if you are wrong, this often affords the client the chance to state a specific concern.

3. **Setting long-term targets**
   If in your annual plan for 2015, your company set a target of 8% annual sales growth and if that translates into 60 new counter sales, and if your counter staff numbers 6, this would be about 10 new sales transactions per year per counter person or <u>one new transaction every two months</u> developed by each counter person. Keep your long-term target in mind.

4. **Setting short-term targets**

What can I, as a counter person, do to encourage sales, without coming across as a hard-nosed sales person? You must close the loop. Closing the loop means having concrete action regarding the next step for the client. That is, you must explain the follow-on service or product to each client. Enquire if they want such follow-on service or product, from which you would elicit a response of:

  - "Not at all" – thank you, we appreciate your business here
  - "Yes, now" – then introduce them to the person from the follow-on area of your company directly or via an email
  - "Not now, but perhaps later" – then set a specific date for later. "Can I have Diana, my associate, contact you two months from now, namely about October 31?"
  - "Not sure" – set a specific date within 30 days "Diana to check on whether this product might appeals to you or not."

- To ensure the loop is closed we recommend that a 'close-the-loop' enquiry sheet with the 4 options above be filled out at each transaction event by each front-line worker.
- Have data available. The lead hand must ensure, before the client-interaction event that all sales and support printed material is on hand in the right place and in the right quantity – regardless of to whom that responsibility otherwise, lies.
- Statistics must be kept based on these 4 quotations above for each front-line worker.
- The short-term house-keeping target must be set by each lead hand. For example, the target might be that 90% of all sales interactions will have the close-the-loop form completed. Or it might be that each front-line worker's success rate would be measured. For example, in 2014 of the 120 close-the-loop forms filled in by staff this past year, 100 of them had specific follow-up action and of those, 10 turned into subsequent sales, ensuring that this front-line worker met the target (10 stated above).

5. Fulfill your company obligations

Since each lead hand reports to someone, that superior must continually monitor the lead hand's target set by the method above.

6. The sales obligations of other company staff members

Other staff members who are less directly connected to sales opportunities can take small sales initiatives as well by being proactive about asking questions of prospects or clients

  - Set a target of 2 client contacts per week, in one form or another. (If you don't have a reason for contacting a client, make one up – a clever one, of course.) Ask for help from other staff, if you need it.
  - Belong to the community as a company representative.

Each superior should enquire of, or have a record of, the actual staff contacts of clients, or prospects, made by each reporting person each week.

Now just watch your sales figures increase!

Bill