

Followup is crucial

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Contributing Writer

WITHOUT followup, most sales would never take place.

However research shows that only 48 per cent of us ever follow up more than five times, even though 80 per cent of sales are made after the fifth to twelfth contact!

One of the reasons that people are afraid to follow up (and there are many) is because they don't want to feel like a nuisance. So to ease these concerns, I want to share six tips to use to ease your followup fear!

■ When making the first sales contact with a client, be sure to listen. We have all heard this before, but now take it one step further. Listen, understand, take notes and follow through on concerns. But where do you keep your notes? Get rid of the sticky notes! Use a proper customer relationship management program to ensure that you are keeping good notes on all of your clients, one that allows you to journal your conversations, meetings, and upcoming reminders.

■ Ready to make your first followup call? (Believe me it will get easier each time.) Pull up your client's information. Go back to your journal entries and see what their likes and dislikes are, perhaps they have just celebrated an anniversary — bring this up at the beginning of your conversation so that it shows you were listening. If you still have to follow up to make the sale (which will be 98 per cent of the time) then let them know you will call them next week on Tuesday afternoon. Now you are obligated to make that third follow up.

■ Find an article or point of interest that your client may find interesting and send it to them just as an FYI with a note saying "I thought of you when I saw this, hope you enjoy."

■ Make your third followup after reading your client profile. An easy call, "As we discussed last week I had it in my calendar to ring you, but I also wanted to see what you thought of my article that I sent to you." Take notes on your conversation. Still no close? Let them know you will follow up next Tuesday. Your obligation.

■ Followup number 4. Pull up your client's information. Read it. How can you add value to this relationship? Now focus on fulfilling their needs more than thinking of making the sale. When you do this, you create a relationship, and guess what? You will WANT to follow up with them.

■ Ready to make your fifth followup call? Don't stop now, this is when your odds are so much higher of closing a sale, and developing an even deeper relationship with your clients. If you don't complete the sale here, complete steps 1-6 again and watch your funnel fill up.

You see, if you add value to your relationships with your clients, they will be much more inclined to purchase from you than from someone that doesn't go the extra mile. It doesn't take much, but you will sure stand out from the rest. Remember, fortune is in the followup.

Mary-Jane Mehlenbacher is the founder of Fütü CRM solutions, a web-based customer relationship management program. With more than 25 years of experience in sales and management, Mary-Jane is actively involved in the North Shore business community.



NEWS photo Mike Wakefield

Taking a stand

SIENA Tasaka Owens (front) checks out the Hospital Employees Union's Living Wage Campaign, which made a stop at Lions Gate Hospital with the Living Tree for Living Wages. Lower income support workers hung items on the tree that indicated what a living wage means to them.



BC HYDRO VEGETATION MAINTENANCE - PADMOUNTED TRANSFORMERS

To assure continued safety and system reliability, BC Hydro is removing vegetation around all BC Hydro padmounted transformers to clearance standards.

Vegetation management work in North Vancouver, West Vancouver and on Bowen Island will continue until March 31, 2012.

BC Hydro requires the area around its electrical equipment to remain clear for the following reasons:

- for the safety of our employees operating the equipment,
- to prevent overheating of the equipment, and
- to facilitate emergency repairs or replacement of the equipment.

The clearances around the transformers are:

- 2.5m from any and all doors
- 0.9m from all other sides

Prior to BC Hydro removing the vegetation, customers may prune or maintain vegetation around transformers on their property to these clearances. If not, vegetation removal will be completed by BC Hydro crews.

For more information about safely planting near BC Hydro equipment and clearance standards, visit bchydro.com/safety

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