

Recession Proof Your Sales

by **Rich Delaney**



Whether or not there is currently a nationwide recession is a point upon which economists do not agree. The rest of us mortals are more concerned about our specific businesses and how to ensure they continue to grow — profitably.

However, the uncertainty about the economy is on everyone’s mind and this requires us to promote our services in a more focused manner.

The following marketing strategies can be relied upon to recession proof your sales. Implement these tactics and your business will not just survive—but thrive.

Re-acquaint yourself with your customers

Customers are being faced with new challenges and uncertainties of their own. They need your professional guidance, insights and perspectives to help them make the right decisions moving forward. The concern you show will be repaid by strengthening the relationship. Your advice on how to use your services more efficiently, and possibly some cost-saving measures, positions you as a partner and not just a vendor.

Make those thank you calls

Go beyond having conversations with just the primary customer contact. Assign the other contacts with each firm to members of your staff, and have them express their thanks for doing business, inquire if there is anything your company can improve, and inquire about their priority issues. This “conversation research” may just reveal a host of issues that your company can use to determine a better way to serve those customers. The information may also provide a strategic advantage for your firm over your competition.

Review past prospect proposals

Spend time pulling out the old proposals to prospects and call them to find out how they are doing, if

they ever implemented the alternative to your proposal they decided upon, and, if so, what were the results. These “touch-base calls” will not only show you are still interested in doing business with the prospect but will reveal opportunities to address current issues. They will, even if unexpressed, be impressed that you took the time to follow up with them.

Retrain your staff

Too often the “assumption” is faulty that our staff knows the competitive strengths of our products and services. Each staff member needs to be part of the selling process and know the scope of services and the competitive advantages. There can never be too much training if you want to be a leading edge company. This retraining is especially important when your company has introduced a series of new products or has hired new staff.

Engage your vendors

An untapped resource for many companies is their vendors. These individuals see what is going on from a different vantage point and can provide insights and perspective to industry opportunities. You will be surprised at what you will discover when you have an in-depth discussion with a vendor. They can give you candid comments on how you are positioned in the market and your strengths and perceived weaknesses. Your time will be well spent.

With the implementation of the above five tactics you will add new sales, identify new product opportunities, and differentiate your business so you will be in a superior position for growth as the current economy strengthens and expands.□

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