

Spinning a Profitable Web

Can Web technology actually help increase sales?

Editor's Note: In this column space of *Vet-Advantage*, we will give you insight into both basic and advanced tactical selling techniques that will help you serve customers better than ever before. But let us preface this with a warning. The material in these articles is not for salespeople who are not ready to push themselves harder than ever before. It is for the professional who seeks constant improvement, fresh ways to serve customers, and constant learners who are never satisfied with being average. If this is you, it's great to have you on board. Now let's get to work!

E-newsletters, CRM, blogs, podcasts, YouTube, MySpace, LinkedIn, Social Networking ... Ugh! What are you supposed to do? Whether you are a business, an entrepreneur or a salesperson, you are no doubt being bombarded with new technology terms every day. But of all the new ways to connect with prospects, what are the tools you should be using to make sure you get to the marketplace more often and more powerfully than your competition? How do you know if a new sales and marketing technology will actually turn into profit?

While the answers are not easy, the first step begins with a decision by you to stop running from the confusion and start learning from it. Will it take some time? Absolutely, but one thing is clear – those that are embracing new sales and marketing technologies are finding innovative ways to find more customers, more quickly and more profitably.

While I don't claim to be a technoprofit expert, let me share with you the benefits you will find with some of the latest techno-tools:

- **E-newsletters.** These are an easy way to regularly inform customers how you can help them. But here is the secret. Your e-newsletter has to add VALUE to the person receiving it. They should contain 80



Those that are embracing new sales and marketing technologies are finding innovative ways to find more customers, more quickly and more profitably.

percent valuable information and 20 percent sales info. Aweber is an online service you should check out. Sign up, get comfortable, and before you know it, you will create loyal customers that wouldn't dare turn to the competition.

- **CRM.** OK salesperson, I know how much you hate inputting customer data into your computer. But stop fighting it! Because if you use it correctly, you will get to the right customers at the right time ... while your competition is driving all over town looking for somebody to talk to.
- **Blogs.** A blog is simply an easy way to deliver information to people who care what you think. So the trick here is to have knowledge in your head that customers want. Then go to a service like Bravenet.com and create one yourself. Even as a novice, you can be an official blogger before you know it.
- **YouTube.** You mean YouTube can actually be used as a business tool? Yes! In fact, there is a cool new camera out there that is called Flip™ that you can use to quickly capture video testimonials of happy customers immediately after they purchase your product. You then flip out a USB

adapter that is part of the camera, plug it in, and upload the video to YouTube or any number of video hosting sites. You can even create Video E-cards of you thanking a customer for their time. Pretty cool, huh? Regarding testimonials, wouldn't it be great to refer a potential prospect to your YouTube site where they can see and hear live customers saying how great you and your company are?

“It's not about technology. It is about getting leverage to add value and make a profit.”

– Ford Saeks, Technology and Internet Marketing Expert

(Quick note. You might want to check with your company to get approval for this before you do it. I don't want them mad at me.)

- **Podcast.** A podcast is simply an audio file that somebody can download onto their iPod or MP3 player that allows them to take *you* with them. If your company has a message that needs to spread, you can create a regular informational podcast that educates the marketplace. Which means if your company is the expert in a certain product offering, why not create a podcast helping your market better understand the benefits of it?

- **MySpace, LinkedIn, Plaxo-Social Networking** sites are all the rage and frankly, I am still figuring out how they can add value and profit to a business. If you are like me, you are probably getting invited to join one of these sites frequently. In fact you are probably wondering who the heck the guy named Ned Jones is who claims to be your long lost business associate. Be careful. If you find



yourself responding to LinkedIn invites more than reaching out to customers everyday, then it's time to redirect your energy.

Oh, and there is one technology I didn't mention ... the phone. While all of these tools can be effective in finding and keeping loyal customers, they are not meant to replace good old fashion human contact. But with a little techno curiosity, time and effort, you will find the above tools just might help you get more face and phone time than ever before. And if that is the case, then the technology will help you add value, and more importantly, add more profit to your business. ■

To learn how to get and keep more customers using sales and marketing technology, listen to Brian interview Internet sales and marketing expert, Ford Saeks, by going to www.preciseselling.com/Radiotechtips.htm. President of Kansas City-based PRECISE Selling, Brian Sullivan delivers seminars and Internet training programs on sales, customer service, leadership and presentation skills to companies of all sizes. He also hosts the radio talk show Entrepreneurial Moments, a show dedicated to personal and business development. To find out more, visit him at www.preciseselling.com or e-mail Brian at bsullivan@preciseselling.com.