



What to do When Sales Efforts don't Pay Off

By Carl Davidson

If you are like many in the industry, you sit through seminars that your manufacturer, the Water Quality Association (WQA) and I have put on, hearing new ideas that you can't wait to try. Many times you return home and give them a try, only to find that the technique you had such high hopes for doesn't work. Is it you? Does the rest of the world make their fortune and leave you in the dust? Not at all. Very few people actually change from what they learn at seminars. In fact, there is a saying that no one ever learned to ride a bike at a seminar. This article discusses what to do when you attend a seminar to make sure it pays dividends for years to come.

Tips for implementing sales seminar tricks

Focus on Dates & Numbers

Rather than work on a lot of ideas at once, pick two or three and make a commitment to try them for a period, such as 90 days. Why? I find that it takes a longer period than many suspect to get used to a new technique and to get good at it. It takes 90 days to give an idea a fair shake, so we suggest you only select ideas you really think will be enjoyable and profitable for you and make a serious commitment.

Each idea you select will remain a dream until you attach to it dates by which things are to be accomplished. For example, let's assume you have decided to use water parties as a prospecting technique. You will need to determine dates for when you will write a script, start calling, purchase gifts and

begin the process. You will also need to decide what days of the week you will hold parties, what activities you will have at them and much more. Make sure you break your plan into action steps with deadline dates.

Next, you need to set minimum actions and expectations for each step. For example, let's assume that one of your goals is to get condominium property managers to allow you to hold water parties in the condominium. As discussed, you need to decide the dates when you will have a script or mailing developed, when you will have a party planned and when you will decide on party games, prizes, etc. Next, you need to set minimum actions and standards for success. For example, will it take 10 calls to property managers to get

one appointment? How many calls per day or week will you commit to do? Numbers make it happen. Set numbers that you believe will work and adjust as you learn.

Don't Chicken Out

One error we see often is chicken-ing out of the program. In the above example, we discussed calling property managers. Eventually, you or someone on your team will decide it is best to write a letter instead of calling or meeting in person because letter writing involves less rejection. Unfortunately, it also puts results far in the future and tells the customer too much. After they read the letter, they don't need to see you—they know what you are offering. Keep your contacts face to face and you will get measurable results quickly.

Do a Reasonable Number

Another common error is doing a very small number of contacts or actions. A dealer called last week and said, "I tried your ballot box idea to generate leads, and it didn't work." I asked how many times he had presented it in person during the last month. He replied, "Four times." Because most contact techniques have a success rate of about one in 10, when you commit to one, you should try it 50 to 100 times before you make a conclusion about whether it will work.

No Head Bangin'

Whenever someone teaches you a sales or prospecting technique, be sure they give you a number to expect as a result of using the technique. For

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example, I recommend that a sales staff should average two demos per day and close 33%. Everything should have a number. That includes numbers for nonsales staff, such as how many new sales should salt delivery drivers bring in per month, how many appointments should be made from 10 call-ins, etc.

If you give an idea a reasonable try and are not reaching the goal for success, call the person who presented the idea and ask for help. He or she should be willing to review your scripts or style and help you reach the numbers expected. Don't bang your head for weeks or months of failure—call after 50 or 100 attempts and get the assistance you need.

Measure, Tweak & Manage

Remember that all prospecting, sales and management success is based on numbers and expectations. There is no luck; there are no born salespeople. You can do it if you try a reasonable number, keep track of results and ask for support as soon as you need it. *wqp*

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