

How to Multiply Your Sales Force

BY TOM ST. LOUIS

If you are a business owner, it may have crossed your mind that if you could only clone yourself, you'd get a lot more done, close more sales and, basically, make all the money you want. The notion that limitations in time and resources are the cause of our lack, is a difficult perception to shake. But what if you could get any number of people working for you, bringing in new customers, telling your sales story, and you didn't even have to pay them?

It may surprise you to discover that most of the best and most resilient, resourceful marketing approaches play off that principle. The essence of marketing is communicating significant value to others. You want as many people as possible to find out about this significant value without having to hire a big sales staff. So how do you do it? How do you create the perception of compelling benefit in a large and ever-growing number of people without hiring a sales force?

The folks who love what you sold them: your customers. They have already not only been brought to the point where they wanted your product more than their cash, they have lived and worked with what you have sold them – and still love you! Amazing! These folks are your most valuable asset, and don't let your accountant tell you differently. Cultivating their trust and affection and continued patronage has to be a top priority for you. If you always acknowledge and reward referrals in that order you will ensure their loyalty.

Sending them warm, personal, handwritten thank you notes works wonders. If you really want to go hog wild, send them a plaque or a trophy. Acknowledgment is a very powerful social force. Unleashed in your marketing, it will create lasting bonds of loyalty.

Excellence. Walt Disney was fond of saying that you have to do what you do so well that people can't help telling other people about you. For that reason, Disney theme parks use obsessive cleanliness to astonish their patrons; cleanliness is a marketing tool!

To a certain extent, any business deserving of continued existence will inspire some referrals. You can multiply your referrals by

adding "wows" to how you deliver what you do. Sit down and brainstorm with your staff to create three to five inexpensive and easy ways to exceed your customers' expectations. People will tell others about you – they won't be able to stop themselves.

Unlimited Partners on a pay-for-performance-basis-or-free. Every business owner wants sales reps on a performance basis. Who wouldn't? But did you know that there are some open-minded and professional people in your market who already have your best future customers as customers right now? In other words, the new customers you will get next year are already dealing with a lot of people in a number of areas. Do you see the opportunity?

One of the most powerful and least understood marketing strategies is to joint venture with others who offer non-competitive services. If you can get them to see that they can realize passive income streams by introducing you to their good customers, you'll be amazed at the results. This kind of marketing, unlike chasing reluctant and resistant prospects, produces partners who can bring you customers by the dozens.

Direct Mail. Right at this moment, many people in your target market want what you have to sell. Tomorrow it will be a different fragment of that group. There's absolutely no way you can always be there at the right moment with all of them. Direct mail lets you connect, on a regular basis, with some of them at the magic moment. If you do direct mail well, you will build mind share with the whole group so that, at the moment of need, they will call you, ready to transact.

Always tell your whole sales story. The ones who are interested will read every word. Others will take note of your passion for complete communication. When their need develops, and it will eventually, they will remember you, as long as you keep communicating.

A letter can tell a complete sales story for under a dollar. Can you really afford not to be using direct mail? If person-to-person selling takes several contacts to close a sale, why should it be different with direct mail?

Signs. They never sleep. Once perfected, they stay perfect for a long time. They play off the relentless training we have received as

readers. Did you ever notice how difficult it is not to read a sign? The information is immediately accepted as true and often bypasses our critical faculties. If you operate a retail establishment, make sure you are taking advantage of your opportunity for internal and external communications through signs. One well designed inside sign offering additional services or communicating a special can boost your profits by 20%.

You. How can you multiply your personal effectiveness? Since you can't afford to pay for two or three of yourself, why not multiply your output and impact? One simple way is to learn to manage your time.

Taking regular breaks in which nothing you do or think about has anything to do with business is powerful and too easy to overlook. With a clear head, it is very easy to follow the number one rule of effective time-management: always focus on only the most important thing at that moment. Without regular breaks, you are doomed to get bogged down. Then, instead of cloning yourself, you have cut your effectiveness in half, or worse.

Use the team approach. Nobody is as smart as all of us. And, nothing works as well as several good tactics combined. Earlier, I defined a sale as a situation in which a person prefers your product or service to their cash, right now. Yesterday, I received a call from a prospect who had heard me talk, had seen one of my ads and had visited my Web site. She left a message to the effect that she wanted to spend \$500 to get some advice on a specific marketing problem.

That's the power of cloning yourself through marketing. People come to you already sold by the combination of various tactics. I use classified ads, speeches, print ads, letters, postcards, cassette tapes, recorded messages, television interviews, articles like this, Web sites, and telemarketing follow-up. Each point of contact is like another member of my sales team bonding with countless strangers, building trust and confidence in my services.

The secret to multiplying your sales force is to use leverage. Leverage your time, your knowledge, your contacts, and your message. **SBCM**

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