

# 10 TERRIFIC SALES TIPS FOR SALES PROFESSIONALS

*Proven strategies for increasing sales in tough competitive markets.*

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Dear Sales Professional:

You already know today's marketplace is tougher than ever. There's greater competition, customers are more demanding... and they're more price-conscious. They're also better informed and have more information than you think they have.

You can't change the marketplace. But you can improve your sales results in this highly competitive climate... with the proven sales strategies contained in this booklet. It doesn't matter what you sell: real estate, computers, software, copywriting services, or used cars... you can apply these tips to your business and see your sales explode.

In the pages that follow you will find 10 sales techniques that can help you reach more prospects, overcome price-resistance and other objections, close more sales, and reach your goals. In short, strategies and ideas that can boost your income and profit – almost immediately. These techniques work. I know. Try them!



## TIP # 1 - Let The Product Sell Itself

Remember when you went to the pet shop to buy a puppy? What really sold you? Was it the sales clerk holding and petting the puppy, or was it when YOU held him? When you were holding the pup, and feeling its warm, soft fur, and he snuggled up to your neck and fell asleep on your shoulder...

...is that when you were “sold?”

When a product has strong appeal or unique features, give it a chance to sell itself. A demonstration? Of course! But even better is to let the customer use the product.

**Example:** Suppose you’re selling a desktop publishing system. Instead of sitting at the computer and pushing the mouse around yourself, hand it to the customer. Encourage her to try it. Show her how easy it is to use. Resist the temptation to “show off” and whiz through all the functions and features yourself. Instead, be a coach. Introduce her to the exciting possibilities owning your system would open up for her.

Even better, help her design a simple form or other document she could use in her business, then print it out and give it to her on the spot — to demonstrate the immediate usefulness of the system. When she creates her desktop-designed document, she will have a sense of involvement and accomplishment that goes a long way toward closing your sale.

**Or...**

...suppose you're a realtor selling a house. If the owner is not around (and they usually aren't, or shouldn't be, when you're showing a house) have the prospect sit down and relax. Bring them a glass of water or a soda, and ask them what they're looking for in a home. What kind of “feel” do they want their home to have. Then take them on a walk around the property, and have them imagine their family gatherings there.

I did this with one property and it sold the same day, and I wasn't even a real estate agent. I was just there to open up the house for the realtors because they couldn't remember the combination to the key-box!

The prospect was so impressed with the house (and the 28 acres it was sitting on) along with the river front access, that he wrote a check out for the whole amount of the sale, and told the realtor to “draw up the papers” and call him! He financed it 100% out of his own pocket. The

two real estate agents who were there were dumbfounded!

**Here's another one:** you're a new car salesman... or perhaps you're a "used" car salesman, whatever. Do you take the prospect out for a spin in the car? Perhaps if the car is a Bentley, Ferrari, or a Rolls-Royce. Maybe he's a rich old coot and has a driver. But if you're not selling "elite" automobiles, you're going to let him get in the driver's seat.

Why? Because the prospect wants to see how it "feels" and responds to his "control" of the vehicle. He might not find it comfortable and you'll have to switch him to another model. He might not like the color, or the features.

But, however the sale is made, it's only going to be made when the customer "takes control" of the product—or service, whichever the case may be—and not when you're in control.

A lot of it is an illusion of the customer being in control. And in actuality, they are... if you don't believe it, you will when they ask you to leave the premises without a sale! Ouch!

## TIP # 2 - How To Warm Up A Cold Phone Call

Most prospects are busy and resent telephone calls as an intrusion. They think you're a telemarketer and immediately want to tell you "they're not interested." Fortunately, there's an easier way to get prospects to become more receptive to your phone call.

I have to be honest and say that I hate cold calling. I think it's the most unproductive method of gaining clients, but some people still try it anyway. If you're brave enough to try it, then you might want to "redefine" your presentation.

When cold calling, the first thing you should say when the prospect answers the phone is:

"This is Joe Jones from XYZ Systems calling. Am I catching you at a good time right now?"

The difference between this opening and others is that you are asking ***their permission*** to talk before proceeding.

The prospect can only give you one of two answers: "yes" or "no."

If they say "no," then you ask when would be a good time to call back. And you call back at that time and date, treating it like an appointment — which it is. Since they'll be expecting your call, they'll be ready to talk — and listen.

If the prospect says "yes," then they are telling you it's OK to go ahead. They are giving you permission to proceed.

People like people who respect their time. Asking first if it's OK to talk shows that you recognize that your prospect is probably busy (they usually are...) and their time is valuable. This creates rapport and "good will" that leads to success.

## TIP # 3 - Good Follow-Up Is The Key To Closing More Sales

According to a recent study, most sales to businesses are made on or after the fourth or fifth call... but only one salesperson out of ten will contact the prospect more than three times!

So, lack of follow-up is a major reason for failing to close —accounting for as much as 35 percent of all lost sales, according to one source. And the major reason for poor follow-up is that the seller lacks an efficient follow-up system.

The solution? Having a good contact management system on your computer, or your BlackBerry. Or, you can subscribe to a good [Unified Communications System](#). Most computers come with some sort of contact management software, and if yours doesn't, then you can probably find something on the Internet that can handle your needs. Sometimes, just keeping a simple running list in Excel spreadsheet will do the trick.

You'll want to keep some key pieces of information in your file, like:

- Contact name, business, address, phone numbers, etc.
- Customer profile (type of business, size, gross revenues...)
- Last contact date, and history of notes and conversations
- Follow up date
- Status

Mozilla has some great software packages developed on the Open Source (GNU) protocol, and they're free. Mozilla [Sunbird](#) is a fantastic calendar program that keeps track of your appointments, and will even archive them for you. Mozilla [Lightning](#) is a hybrid of their email client, along with Thunderbird and Sunbird, and is also free. Either of them—or both—are great for managing your contacts.

## TIP # 4 - Plan Your Work And Work Your Plan

Sales success starts with a well-conceived plan. Some of the questions to ask during the sales planning process:

“What’s our target for this year?”

Having a definite dollar figure in mind (e.g., “\$500,000 gross revenue”) gives you a concrete objective to focus on.

“How many sales do we need to reach our goal?”

To continue with our example, if your average sale is \$10,000, you need to make 50 sales per year... one sale per week... to gross \$500,000 per year.

“How many leads must we generate to make those sales?”

If you close one out of five prospects, for example, you need five leads per week to reach your goal of one sale per week.

“How many sales calls must I make to generate the required number of leads?”

Let’s say you uncover one “hot” prospect for every 10 cold calls you make. Based on that average, you need to make 50 calls per week — 10 calls per day — to achieve the goal of \$500,000 a year in sales revenue.

I know this sounds a lot like prospecting in the insurance business, but it works, and they still do it all the time. As a matter of fact, I just recently conducted a seminar for a couple of insurance companies in Lubbock where they were doing just that. Only I showed them how to “tighten up” their “Lead To Close” ratio. I use a formula called “The Marketing Equation” to help businesses focus on bringing in more leads, and converting them into sales.

Whether you're in the insurance business, real estate, or the restaurant business (yes, even restaurants can use this system) you'll definitely want to develop your “Business and Marketing Plans” a—then WORK THEM!

It’s important that, once you create your sales plan, you stick with it. If your plan requires making 10 calls a day, then you MAKE THOSE 10 CALLS EVERY DAY! Many people fail to achieve their sales goals because

they don't do what is required on a consistent basis to make the goal happen. Do you?

## TIP # 5 - How To Overcome The Objection, “Your Price Is Too High”

Price is often cited as one of the biggest hurdles to closing the sale, especially with big-ticket items such as computer systems or industrial equipment.

One solution is to eliminate “sticker shock” by offering financing as an alternative. If you're in sales, and you don't have a finance or leasing company to work with, you need one. I've been using several over the years, and you can find a lot of them in your area just by looking them up at YellowBook.com or going directly to your Yellow Pages phone directory.

There are several benefits to quoting monthly payments over the sticker price:

- First, quoting a small monthly lease payment makes your product seem more affordable. Compare “\$217 a month” to “\$10,000.” Which sounds more attractive to you?
- Second, leasing is flexible. By varying the term (length) of the lease, you can tailor the monthly payment to fit your prospect's budget.
  - **Example:** If \$400 a month under a 36-month lease is too much for your customer, quote a 60-month lease at \$275 a month.
- Third, a large increase in sales price translates into a small increase in monthly lease payment. This means you can make even bigger sales. For example:
  - “For another \$5 a month, you can add a desktop publishing program — so you can publish your client newsletter in-house and save a bundle in typesetting charges!”



## TIP # 6 - Agree With Your Prospects – Don't Argue With Them

*"Whether you're right or wrong... you've still lost the sale if you argue with your prospect."*

You don't sell people by arguing with them. A better strategy is to agree with your prospects... or to at least acknowledge that their viewpoint has merit.

Two "magic phrases" that can help you when dealing with objections are "I understand" and "Many of our customers have said the same thing."

**PROSPECT:** Money is tight. I'm reluctant to spend anything right now.

**YOU:** I understand – many people are keeping a lid on spending right now due to the economy. But let me ask you this: if the savings the system creates can rapidly pay back its cost, would you consider that a good investment?

The "key" element here is to get your prospect to use the word "yes." Getting them to a "yes" in the conversation, will eventually get them to a "yes" at the close. If you give them ANY "wiggle room" where they can answer with a "no"... you've lost them.

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**PROSPECT:** *"I don't have time to learn all these programs!"*

**YOU:** You know, Mr. Prospect, many of our customers told me exactly the same thing... until they went through our 2-hour Start-Up Free Training Program and saw how really simple and quick this system is to learn.

**"Many of our customers told me exactly the same thing"** is the "magic phrase" here, because it says to the prospect, *"Your opinion is valid, because others in your position share it... but WE have the solution!"*

## **TIP # 7 - How To Overcome Fear Of Obsolescence**

A major factor preventing the prospect from buying your product or service is fear of making a mistake – specifically, of spending a lot of money today, only to find out that if they had waited a year, they could have gotten something twice as good – at half the price. Maybe, maybe not. It's called “Buyer's Remorse” or they have second thoughts about their purchase becoming obsolete. Either way, they fear it coming back to haunt them, or worse, getting fired over it.

If a prospect expresses concern over obsolescence or being “stuck” when new and better equipment is introduced next year, the solution is to tell the prospect to lease rather than purchase the product outright.

Why?

Because most leasing companies will let your prospect “upgrade” in the middle of a lease, for better equipment—or, if the price is lower—to renegotiate the lease terms. It's sort of like rewriting a mortgage.

Explain to your prospects that at the end of the lease, they can either buy the equipment, or return it to the leasing company without further obligation, or upgrading to newer equipment. The choice is theirs.

So, if the equipment has become obsolete—as most computer systems do—they will be glad to know that they're not going to be stuck with it. They can return it and acquire new, state-of-the-art equipment.

By the way: leasing is also great for you—the reseller—since you get another sale when your customer upgrades to a new unit at the end of the lease.

So, what are you going to do? You're going to highlight this item, and when you finish reading this report, you're going to look into signing up with some leasing companies to help you close your sales.

## **TIP # 8 - A Novel Way To Use Voice Mail To Get Past Secretaries, Receptionists, And Other “Phone Barriers”**

Here’s a strategy for getting past the “gate-keeper” and through to the decision-maker:

First, place a call after hours. You're probably going to think I'm crazy for suggesting this, but stick with me. I'll explain...

You will, in most cases, reach a voice mail box (or answering machine or an “after hours” answering service) for the prospect. Leave a message saying you will call back the next day:

“Hi, this is Sue Rogers from ABC calling for Mr. Smith. I will call you back 10 a.m. Tomorrow.”

Call back the next morning. When the secretary answers and attempts to block you with a typical screening question (“What is this in reference to?”, or “Who are you with?”, or “Will he know why you are calling?”, etc.), you simply answer:

“Mr. Smith is expecting my call...”

...which, of course, is true – because you left a message saying you’d be calling!

This technique works! I know: I use it all the time!

Why? Because nine times out of ten the gatekeeper will put through the caller—IF the call is expected.

If challenged by the prospect or the receptionist, you explain, “I left a voice mail message saying I would be calling today at 10 a.m.”

## **TIP # 9 - Make Sure You're Selling To A Qualified Prospect, And Not A "Hireling" In The Back Cubicle**

Many people like to shop, but you want to spend your time with serious—and qualified—potential buyers. How do you separate the "Lookie-Lou's" from the real prospects?

Be sure the person you're talking to has the authority to make the purchase decision. Ask your prospect, "Is there anyone else involved in this buying decision that should be involved in our meeting this coming Tuesday?" When the prospect answers, "Oh, of course my boss has to sign off on this," then suggest that it would make sense for the boss to attend. Otherwise, if you're dealing with the "Final Authority" in the decision making process, by all means, proceed with your appointment.

A qualified prospect has a need or problem that your product or service can solve. You want to make sure this need exists before spending a lot of time pursuing a sale.

For example, a reseller offering LAN solutions isn't interested in talking with businesses that need only a single PC. So the LAN reseller would always ask, "How many PC users do you have in your organization?" to qualify the prospect.

Another consideration is money. If the acquisition of the product is to be financed, you want to get some idea of the prospect's budget. For example: "A system like this leases for about \$200 to \$300 a month. Is this within your budget?" is a polite yet direct way of financially qualifying the prospect.

## **TIP # 10 - Offer Financing In-House And Close Your Sale Now**

Arrange to offer financing direct to your customers through a leasing company. Make sure the leasing company will do all the credit-checking and paperwork for you. If there are any "split costs," make sure the leasing company is financially sound enough to handle it.

Having a relationship with a leasing company enables you to close your sale on the spot. If you don't offer leasing, you risk losing control of the sale when prospects have to walk out the door to arrange their financing with some bank or finance company.

You don't want prospects to leave before the sale is closed. They might change their minds or put off making a decision. You could also lose the sale if they don't know where or how to get financing, or are turned down. Being able to quote and offer leasing on the spot prevents these problems and keeps you in control.

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I hope you've enjoyed reading this report and have benefited from it. If you have any questions or needs in regards to sales training, financing or leasing, feel free to give me a call.

Sincerely,

Ernest O'Dell

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