

mei ster:
Suffix denoting
a professional
practitioner

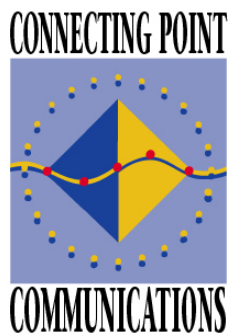
ProfitMeister

M A X I M I Z I N G Y O U R M A R K E T I N G M O N E Y

VOL. 6, #10

“Our team now views the day differently—client first! We start with client stories.”

Karen Bard
Senior Vice President
Merrill Lynch



P.O. Box 3523
Albuquerque, NM
87190
505-280-9772

Client First! Create Sales Culture

Focus on your story, on your clientele and discover the secret to getting people to buy

Staples has the Easy button and a story of how it impacts service. Target markets cheap cool style for the masses. FedEx/Kinkos presents a one stop print, technology and package service store. Each of these giants approaches selling in the same way: they develop a relationship with the client; they place the client first.

Client First! is a philosophy designed to keep the focus on the customer. It's a business method that involves selling for the right reason.

Build your platform

If you set out to read to a child, you'd first have to have a book, right? A similar principle applies to selling. Build the platform, the story, and then sell the product.

Your story gets at the heart of your business, the reason that clients care. That's why Volvo talks about safe transportation and Maytag focuses on providing dependable cleaning with products that require no service. Benefits or solutions sell prospects and customers.

Think clearly about one incident of a person using your product or service. Limit yourself to a few key words or sentences and practice telling the story of what happened as a result.

Plan your strategy

The beauty of a plan is that it provides alignment with the company vision. For

example, when a painting business went from 4000 customers to 400 the owner didn't expect to increase his revenues by 30%. That's exactly what happened because increased focus helped create additional revenues.

The company estimated the average order for existing customers (dollars times frequency per year) and then developed a customer value. Once this value was established, they reviewed records for the past five years and designated the top 100 repeat customers for the firm. By concentrating their focus on these targets during a six month period, they were able to produce a tremendous revenue increase.

The company was also able to write realistic projections based on average customer value and formulate a plan to increase that value over a specified period. Product questions focused on aspects of service that the customer would like to see improved.

Communicate the plan

Sales cultures aren't built in isolation. The most successful organizations work on communicating the plan every day. Simple structures like formalized frequently asked questions (faqs) are provided to employees. Department heads practice role playing situations or scenarios. (For more information on faq's and other structured communication, sign up for the ProfitMeister newsletter and receive the special report "Prepared not Scared: 15 Ways to Check Your Communication Systems.")

To learn more: www.MyConnectingPoint.com

“Nothing happens until a sale takes place. Whatever your position in business you’re still in sales.”

-Brian Tracy

Frequently, employee responses can be pre-planned and then practiced with a flexible script. The articulation of information is much different than the mere reading of it because the difference is felt down to the cellular level.

Employees see and respond to visual cues such as owners interacting with clients or showcasing client success stories at a staff meeting. In addition your plan might elicit employee suggestions on ways they see to implement client first.

Act with enthusiasm

A funny thing happens as this process is implemented. Employees understand what is going on and begin to buy in. Once they know why the client comes first, they can more easily be directed to what. As you make sales a daily priority, the culture begins to shift.

Today’s buyers want access to easy information, be it from an employee, a website or a brochure. One solution is to survey customers and ask them about their preferences; solutions can then be tailored to specific suggestions.

The selling process involves qualifying clients. Making sure that they have the money, authority and desire for your product or service as well as ascertaining that there is a fit and urgency. While you and your employees can train for qualifying skills, nothing beats the power of relationships. A smiling attitude that’s backed with a nice manner and enthusiasm is the basis of a sales culture.

Cultivate, nurture clients

Client First sets the tone for service. Once you position from the Client First standpoint, then your priorities are in order. Your daily activities begin with client contact and end with the same.

Suffice it to say that loyalty begins with a thank you. It’s never too old fashioned to thank a client for their business. Sincere appreciation goes a long way toward building an ongoing relationship.

Loyalty programs help your firm to retain its best customers. A discussion of loyalty programs and how they can help you is the subject of a future ProfitMeister newsletter.

Conclusion

Use the five elements outlined here to build a sales culture for your firm. Here’s how:

- ◆ *Outline your platform. Concentrate on one success, describing the story of how your product/service solved a client’s problem.*
- ◆ *Plan your strategy. Establish a value for your average customer; detail how you expect to add to that value. Project revenues—how many customers does your goal involve? How will you find them?*
- ◆ *Communicate. Role play scenarios. Use a flexible script to review the potential objections you might encounter as you speak with customers.*
- ◆ *Act with enthusiasm. Find prospects who are similar to your best customers and talk with them about your offerings. Sell your stories; talk of successes.*
- ◆ *Take the time everyday to put clients first. Contact them. Take care of them. Collect their stories. Above all, thank them for doing business with you.*

These five steps offer simple solutions; with consistent use you’ll discover the story is the secret to letting people buy and build a sales culture within your firm.

To learn more

For more information contact Mary Ellen Merrigan at 505-280-9772 or email: me@myconnectingpoint.com.



©Mary Ellen Merrigan

Connecting Point
Communications
P.O. Box 3523
Albuquerque, NM
87190-3523
505-280-9772

www.ProfitMeister.com