

Turning Follow-Up Into Sales

By Rochelle Togo-Figa

One of the most effective ways to get more business is to follow up with the prospect. Sadly, 80% of sales opportunities are missed because people do not follow up consistently. Studies have shown that most prospects who do not buy in the short-term usually make a purchase within 12 months. When they make the purchase, it's going to be with the person who has stayed in touch with them on a consistent basis. Prospects do business with people they know, trust, and who understand their needs.

Some of the reasons salespeople don't follow up are:

- There is no organized system in place.
- They're afraid they'll appear too pushy.
- They're afraid they'll be rejected.
- They don't know what to say.
- They call once or twice, and move on to the next thing.

Here's the good news—although for some of you it may seem like bad news: it takes AT LEAST 5-10 follow-ups to close the average sale. Yes, that's the truth. So, if you're routinely giving up after 2-3 tries, you're giving up way too soon. They may not be ready to buy from you now, but if you remain fresh in their minds you'll be the one they'll buy from when they are ready.

Here are 7 easy, simple ways to turn follow-up into sales:

1. **Create Follow-Up Systems:** Select a follow-up system for tracking your accounts that works for you. There are several systems that can help you track your accounts efficiently and effectively. **A personal computer:** There are contact management programs designed for organizing and tracking your accounts. ACT, Goldmine, and Outlook have contact management programs. **A notebook:** Use a single sheet in your notebook for each client and enter the dates of your calls along with notes. Keep your top 10-20 hot prospects in the front of your notebook, alphabetized by client name. **The old-fashioned tickler system:** Set up your folders numerically by dates starting with 1-31. Use a single sheet for each new prospect, and write down the name, phone numbers, address, email address, and any pertinent notes about the account. Then file it in your tickler file system by date of your next contact with them. **A business card file:** Although the space is limited, you can write tiny notes on the card. The card file can be used before information is entered on computer. Use the system that works best for you.
2. **Follow-Up Sales Tools:** It's pretty standard to use the telephone and e-mail for those 5-10 follow-ups with a prospect. Begin to embrace other ways of staying visible to the prospect over a period of time. Some other tools that work are sending letters, faxes, brochures, and literature. Be creative and use testimonial letters from satisfied clients, invite them to a seminar or to lunch, send them a small item with your company name printed on it, or if appropriate, give tickets to a sports event, the theater or a seminar.
3. **Touch-Base Email:** It takes 5-10 touches to close the business, so don't give up. Writing a "soft" touch base email is a non-pressure way of letting prospects know you're thinking of them. Remind them they expressed interest in your product or service. Let them now you'd be happy to meet and specify a time you're available to talk. Let them know if they're not ready that it's perfectly fine with you—you're there for them when they are.

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4. **Personalize Your Follow Up:** There are numerous ways to personalize your follow-up contact with prospects. You can write a hand-written note thanking them for the meeting, or inviting them to meet for coffee or lunch. A hand-written note is a personal touch the prospect will appreciate in a world that's becoming more and more electronic.
5. **What to Say When You Follow-Up:** If you're following up by phone, write out an outline of what you want to say so you come across as confident and prepared. If the prospect asked you to call them on a specific date, make sure to mention that in the message whether they answer the phone or you leave a message. If they're not there when you call, this is more apt to make them feel obligated to call you back. If you reach them, say, "Hello, Mr. Jones, this is Jane Smith of ABC Company. The reason I'm calling you today is that when we last met on March 4th, you suggested I give you a call today to set up an appointment. Would next Tuesday at 3 pm work for you or would Friday at noon be better?"
6. **Develop the Habit of Persistence:** The key ingredient to effective follow-up is persistence. Persistence with the right attitude leads to more business. With persistence, obstacles and problems can't stop you, and most importantly, other people can't stop you. Your ability to follow up will determine your success in sales.
7. **Don't Get Stopped by NO:** You have to be willing to do what it takes to move past the seventh "no" or "I'm not ready yet" to get the sale. A "no" is nothing personal. The prospect is saying "no" to the product, not to you. Think about the fact that when you really want something important, nothing stands in the way. Why not bring those same qualities to your business? How many "No's" are you willing to take before you give up the sale?

ASSIGNMENT:

- Make a list of prospects you've met with who expressed interest but haven't bought from you yet.
- Select one of the follow-up systems to track your prospects. Then set up a schedule of dates when you'll be following up with them and enter those dates in your system. You're now organizing your follow-up calls.
- Send "soft touch-base" emails to these prospects. Make sure the email you write is friendly, brief and non-pressuring.
- Write a personal hand-written note to several prospects letting them know you enjoyed meeting them and invite them to meet for coffee.
- Be organized, creative, and persistent and don't get stopped by "No." Remember it takes AT LEAST 5-10 follow-ups to close the sale!

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Rochelle Togo-Figa, The Sales Breakthrough Expert, is the creator of The Sales Breakthrough System™, a proven step-by-step process that will help you close more sales, sign on more clients and make more money with ease and velocity. To learn more about Rochelle's services and to receive a FREE copy of her special report, 43 Ways to Close More Sales, visit Sales Breakthroughs.com. This article was reprinted with permission. Article Source: <http://EzineArticles.com/1281697>.

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