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Steps Four Through Six The Nine Steps To A Successful Relationship, Part II

by Kathy Ellis, Business Lab Marketing Coach

Happy New Year! What an exciting time. A fresh new year to look forward to...a time to renew our commitments to ourselves, our families, our employees and our customers. Last month we wrote about the first three steps in the nine steps to a successful relationship. In this article we will address steps four, five and six and provide a better understanding on how to get your prospects from interested, all the way to in-motion...The BIGGEST step of all. The nine steps to building a successful relationship are:

1. From unaware to aware: a person sees your direct mail piece, newsletter, business card, advertisement, website; is contacted by your sales team; receives information about you from a friend/colleague or reads a story about your company.
2. From aware to curious: a person is touched/affected by the information in something you or your company might provide.
3. From curious to interested: a person discovers that something you provide may help them.
4. From interested to believing: a person begins to believe that you and your company are real and legitimate.
5. From believing to wanting: a person sees what you are doing/offering and wants to move forward.
6. From wanting to in-motion: a person responds to something you have offered and replies by phone, fax, E-mail, mail...a very BIG step!
7. From in-motion to buyer: a person believes/trusts you and wants the product/service your company provides and begins to pay you.
8. From buyer to satisfied customer: a person becomes a satisfied customer when their trust in you is rewarded.
9. From satisfied customer to advocate: a person receives more/better service/benefits than they expected and it occurs on many occasions...they begin to refer you to others.

***Step 4:** From interested to believing: a person begins to believe that you and your company are real and legitimate.*

At this step you are raising the buying temperature from about 40° to about 90°. To break this step down you need to identify and communicate what your company brings to the table. Share with your customers/prospects who you are and what doing business with you really means. Take an inventory on how you validate your company. What certifications do you have? What associations do you belong to? How long have you been in business? Is the level of education of your team an important consideration for your customers as compared to your competition?

Once you have completed your inventory take another look at all your marketing messages/communications and be certain they are reflective of these validations. You may even consider taking it a step further and creating a company museum or wall of fame to share these validations and accomplishments internally as well as with your customers/prospects.

***Step 5:** From believing to wanting: a person sees what you are doing/offering and wants to move forward.*

This is where your customers/prospects are making internal decisions. They are extremely close to taking an action step. To break this step down you need to be certain your marketing messages always include some form of an action step. Here you will need to decide what type of action you would like your customer/prospect to take. Be certain you have made it extremely easy for them to take this step and offer many choices—fax, call, E-mail, register on line, receive a special report, free consultation, free trial period, seminar, TeleForum, etc.

***Step 6:** From wanting to in-motion: a person responds to something you have offered and replies by phone, fax, E-mail, mail...a very BIG step!*

This is a very critical stage. It will determine what will happen next and will have a significant impact on the future of your relationship with this customer/prospect that you have brought along this far. To understand this step you must have a system in place that recognizes that this step is happening. Be certain you have a successful system in place that address how you will respond; when you will respond; and what you will respond with. Your customer/prospect is just one moment, one step, away from where you really want them.

Strategize with your team on ways to make this moment very special, very memorable. Consider "mass customizing" strategies such as a hand written thank you note or a specially prepared package catering to their industry. Consider also the timing of your response. Your customers will judge the quality of your service based on the timing of your response. This means that the longer you wait to respond to a customer/prospect the larger the gap you will create and the less likely they will be to move onto the next step. Consider also, speed of the leader, speed of the team! Your team will follow the lead you set.

More Information? If you would like to learn more about the nine steps to building a successful relationship with your customers please send an E-mail to ideas@thebusinesslab.com or fax a note on your letterhead to 281-517-0998.

Author's Note: Kathy Ellis is a Marketing Coach and the owner of The Business Lab, a full service marketing and graphic design company. We specialize in relationship marketing programs including database marketing, company brochures, client newsletters and promotional marketing materials for our clients. We share with you our FREE newsletter to showcase powerful marketing tips, techniques and ideas to help you improve your business. The Business Lab is based in Houston, TX at 281-517-0998 or by e-Mail at kathy@thebusinesslab.com