Grow your Network, Grow Your Sales & Revenue by 10%

Sales and marketing are processes, not events. These processes require the same attention to detail as the other aspects of your business. For some, these processes are not intuitive. For some, there is fear of the unknown developing and executing such plans. What are some of the steps you can take to grow your business? Other presenters have discussed proven ideas and tools for marketing & growth. Let’s look at another often overlooked avenue for growth: Courageous Networking. What call it Courageous? Because it requires that you leave preconceived ideas and prior experiences at the door and taking a new look at this proven method of growth.

Courageous Networking has a proven record of ROI and both short term and long term success.

Networking it NOT:

- Predatory
- Selfish
- Reactive
- Occasional
- Complicated
- Optional

MMEC is developing a 4 half-day session program on Courageous Networking. So we can only touch the surface in our time allotted today.

Here are some thoughts and ideas that you can take and begin to become a Courageous Networker.

“Usefulness Begins with Inadequacy!” When we admit that we do not know something or how to do it we begin the process of discovery leading to positive results. Do you know how to create an effective network of people that can help grow your business, and that you can help in return directly or indirectly?

The Right attitude is crucial to successful networking. There is a perception that networking is just about “using” people.

- A Courageous Networker relies on his/her own trustworthiness and credibility.
- A key component to one’s credibility is reciprocity.
- Offering contacts and information to a networking contact is vital.
- Share what you know! Leads and information not applicable to your business may be important to others.
- Start by giving! Share what you know.
- The barrier to Courageous Networking is our own attitude
We all know more people than we think we do.

- Suppliers
- Former Bosses and Managers
- Former Associates
- Former Customers
- Members in Processional Associations
- People within Your Organization

In the 4-day course we delve into personal and community spheres as well. The above list provides a starting point.

Assemble a list of the people that you know. Get creative! Analyze the list and determine who you should contact or reestablish a relationship? Remember that Courageous Networkers give information as freely as they ask for it. You may not always have something to give and your networking contact may not have something for you. Networking works over the long haul.

How Courageous are you and what is your level to growing your business? As Wayne Gretsky said “Your miss 100% of the shots you never take.”

**Aligning All Customer-Facing Messaging: The 3-C’s**

Effective customer-facing messaging must adhere to the standards of good communications. Effective communication must be consistent across your organization. That is, websites, marketing literature, sales presentations, customer service and product support communications must be aligned. Have you ever contacted a company and gotten different information from different functional groups? What was your impression of that company?

Beyond messaging alignment is what I refer to the 3 C’s of communications with current and potential customers. Communications must be:

- Clear
- Concise
- Compelling
The 80/20 Rule in the Digital Age

The axiom that 80% of business comes from 20% of its customers is true for many companies, especially small and new businesses and has been shown accurate over time. And the corollary that 20% of a company’s customer’s turnover every year is equally true.

What does that mean for your business?

First, do you know how concentrated your business is and how vulnerable your company is to this? The first step is determining the concentration ratio of your business. How many customers make up the top 20% of your revenue? What percent are these customers of the total number of ACTIVE customers you serve? Don’t count inactive of potential customers, count only those that place on-going orders. The order cycle is unique to your business; some customers are considered ‘active’ if these companies buy once a year; for others it might be once a month.

Carefully consider the concentration ratio and top customers. Do you know the purchasing plans for these customers over the next twelve months? Is your business with these companies increasing, steady or decreasing? Why? What are your plans to enhance your relationship with these customers? Are there any major changes underway with these customers that you need to react to – e.g., a change in their product offering that impact your sales; are they planning to move; are they up for sale? You do not want to hear bad news when it’s too late. Conversely good new of customer growth is vital for your planning.

You may not have experienced 20% of your customers ceasing to do business with you every year. It is, however, true in the long term and you must be prepared for this. How? By growing business with existing customers and actively cultivating new customers now. You may hardly notice when a lower tier customer stops placing orders; but you do not want to be in the positon of looing a key customer and not having customer(s) in the queue to replace it.