

## Chapter 5: How to Use Technology

Technology helps you communicate with groups of people instantaneously. When selling, it's not only imperative that you take advantage of the benefits of staying connected, but you have to make sure it doesn't make you less engaged. When you're mentally distracted, you won't pick up on all of your customers' needs, and you'll miss potential sales opportunities.

### Email, Social Media & Texts

One benefit of email specifically is that it lends itself to follow up communications. If someone doesn't respond, send another message asking if he or she received the initial email. Every time I send a second message, I always receive several replies stating that they had received the first one, and they appreciate my follow-up. Those replies serve as additional touches to my marketing plan.

These are easy ways to use email to help build your customer relationships.

#### 1. Send Newsletters

Concise newsletters with product images should be a part of your marketing repertoire, and you should send them to customers on a regular basis. Create a generic template that can be customized to meet the needs of different clients.

My last newsletter was aimed at hospitals that buy products to reward volunteers. I included images of water bottle infusers that hold bits of fruit, mint leaves or tea bags. The day after I sent the newsletter, I closed three orders for water bottles. One customer purchased 150 bottles and reordered within five days! I made these sales without ever having to leave the office.

#### 2. Create Deadlines for Customers

Use email as a closing tool by letting customers know that lead-time is growing short and they need to place orders. Example: "I just talked to the cap supplier and they need three weeks lead time to get your caps done. Can I come by tomorrow to finalize your order?"

#### 3. Work at Any Hour

You can send product suggestions and quotes to people any time. On Saturday and some Sundays I email customers so they can have information available to them when they arrive in the office on Monday morning.

#### 4. Send Supplier Orders

I place all supplier orders by email so I can keep my orders organized in account files on the site. All I have to do is create files for my customers, and pertinent information is only a click away.

#### 5. Send Paperless Invoices

I send invoices to clients in the mail as well as digitally. This increases cash flow because customers can click on a button included on the invoice and pay me automatically.

## Rules to Live By

There's no better way to increase your inventory of contacts than by sending emails and using social media. To increase your success, follow this set of rules.

- **Be accurate.** When talking with anyone, each message you send is a direct reflection of you. To portray yourself as professional, check all your messages to make sure they do not include misspellings or grammatical errors. Since you never know where messages might end up, always make sure that everything you send features subjects you are not afraid to share with the world.
- **Say it fast.** Most people only focus on the first few lines of emails, so make sure to place your call-to-action early in the body of your message. Don't make the mistake of only including buying signals at the conclusion of messages.
- **Wait a few minutes.** Take some time before replying to any message you receive. What you end up sending will likely be different than what your initial response was going to be.
- **Keep it neutral.** Avoid language or symbols that could upset others. Many people post religious quotes or political opinions, and there is no place for that in the business world. You may be convinced that your opinions are correct, but many of the people you send message to don't share your agendas – trust me. If you want to change people's minds regarding social matters, the sales profession is probably not for you.
- **Copy with care.** Never waste people's time by sending carbon copies (CC) or blind carbon copies (BCC) to everyone you know. If you bombard people with forwards that don't concern them, it's more than likely that they don't want to receive them.
- **Use small attachments.** Don't overload people's computers and email servers by including large images and attachments. You never know how fast someone else's connection might be, so you don't know how long it will take for them to open the entire message. Also, some email clients will bounce an email that has an attachment over a certain size. Attach small files only, drop the images in Dropbox or share them online.
- **Don't ramble.** If you are a blogger or post on Facebook, never talk so much about yourself that you bore clients and prospects. Networking sites are for networking.

- **Don't overdo it.** If you choose to communicate using Twitter, don't tweet constantly. Don't send them so frequently that your followers dread seeing you show up in their feed. Always monitor your tweets so people actually look forward to receiving them.

Doing business with technology is no different than other forms of selling. The purpose is to move deals along and close sales, but one thing email can't do is tell when customers are sending you the oh-so-subtle signs that they're ready to buy. That's something only *you* can determine.

## **Voicemails**

In some instances, voicemails work better than emails. Email is fast and usually the best way to close sales, but if one party fails to respond in a timely manner, it can make for arduous selling cycles. Decisions that take days over email can often be handled in a few minutes by leaving effective voicemails.

Regardless of how successful you think your initial conversation went, you'll never be guaranteed that anyone will call you back. The fact that prospects and customers don't return calls is a huge problem for salespeople, and it can be draining. Thousands of hours are wasted every year by people waiting for others to call them back. To save you from that experience, I'm going to share my advice on how to leave voicemails that compel customers to respond.

- **Put yourself in your prospect's shoes.** Everyone, including you and me, receives messages on a daily basis, so you are no different than those attempting to leave messages for you. Do you ever wonder why telephone solicitors never want to leave their information when they cannot speak with the person they are trying to reach? It's because they know that no one will ever call them back. Think of this when you leave messages.
- **Make statements.** The way to get people to pay attention to your messages is by giving them a reason to do so. When voice messaging anyone, never just leave your name and number or say:

"Kate, please give me a call back."

Messages such as those are nothing but time-wasters. Whatever messages you choose to leave, make sure that they are always loaded with statements or facts, like these:

"Nancy, I wanted to give you a call to make sure you received my email."

"Bob, I would like to talk about your cap order. The factory is running behind, and I need to send artwork, so they don't miss your due date."

- **Tell customers they're special.** Customers do business with people who value their business, so never miss opportunities to tell customers they matter to you. No gimmicks or tricks needed. Simply remind people that they are important to you all the time. On set schedules, call your customers and leave messages telling them how much you appreciate their business. Don't try to sell anything – just say how much you appreciate them and their business. If you do this frequently, they're more likely to call back when you really need them to.
- **Keep customers in the know.** When customers have open orders, leave status messages for them to show their business is your priority. Never be in the position of your customers having to ask you what's going on with their order. These messages also open up the opportunity for you to ask customers for more business. A good example would be:

“Roberto, I checked on your shirt order and it is scheduled to ship next Thursday. I know that you haven't ordered caps in a while; do you need to place an order for them, too?”

Customers will respect your work ethic and be more motivated to return your calls when you keep them updated.

- **Please help me.** I have always been a proponent of asking prospects and customers for help. Even when I am out making personal calls, I always ask those I meet if they can help me. Most people are honored that you have asked them for help, so when you leave phone messages, do the same. When a sale is going slowly, leave your prospect a message like this:

“Jacob, I know you've been thinking about ordering some coasters. Would it be possible if we got the order going today?”

- **Set deadlines.** Make sure to include expiration dates along with information you leave in voicemails and emails. By creating a sense of urgency, you will receive a much greater percentage of callbacks. Example:

“Tina, remember the pen order we talked about a couple of weeks ago? I talked to the factory today and that product is almost out of stock. Since I don't want you to miss out, could you please let me know today by 5 p.m. if you still need them? I can place the order for you ASAP.”

There are hundreds of other deadline statements that can be added to messages that will move people along.

- **Stay in control.** The desire to be in control of situations is a basic human feeling. The choice of who gets called back and who doesn't is a method of control. Some people don't call others back because they want to appear more important

than they really are. To increase chances of callbacks, let people know that your time is valuable by putting timeframes inside your messages. Example:

“Marcus, I wanted to get back to you. Please give me a call by tomorrow afternoon if you can, because I don’t want to miss your call.”

Also offer options of how people can contact you by email, fax or text.

- **Follow up.** Many salespeople don’t have a follow up plan in place, but you need one. Focus on consistently following up with phone calls and emails. If you meet a prospect on Tuesday, call them back within two days. Never wait to call back later than that or you will lose them. It doesn't matter how good your messages are if you don’t leave them in a timely manner. In today’s fast-paced world, people will forget you in an instant if you don’t stay after them.

No matter how many phone calls you make, none of them will matter unless you use effective communications along with them. Make the above suggestions part of your everyday selling routine to make sure that you’re not just waiting by the telephone—and to get your customers to call *you* back.

## **Be Careful**

Successful selling hinges on many factors. Some are so subtle that you can miss them if you’re not paying close attention. While cell phones and computers can automate some processes, they can’t replace the thought process.

Don’t take phone calls or check email when making sales presentations. I know when I’m in the company of someone and they interrupt the conversation to take a call, it makes me feel as though that person would rather be somewhere else than with me. You wouldn’t want your custom to feel that way – plus, you could end up losing the sale, as one distributor told me. He recounted a time when he was at *ASI Show Dallas*, talking with a wearables supplier:

“Things started out well. I really liked what he was showing me, but minutes into our conversation, his phone rang. Instead of ignoring the call, he held his index finger up and said to me, ‘Just give me a minute.’ After waiting three minutes, I turned and walked away. I hope that call was worthwhile to him, because he lost my sale, and my wearables volume is substantial. I would never think about buying from someone who ignored me for that amount of time.”

Be sure to give clients your undivided attention so you can pick up on cues your competitors are too busy to notice. Also, avoid looking at email when you’re talking to a customer on the phone, because that will make it impossible for you to concentrate on the conversation. To close more sales, make conversations a priority.



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ABOUT**



- \* Free Paper Proof Upon Request
- \* No Overrun Charges
- \* On Time Delivery Guarantee
- \* Preferred Partner Programs
- \* 100% Customer Satisfaction Guaranteed
- \* Customized Distributor Flyers
- \* Innovative Products
- \* End User Friendly Web Sites

## **TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THESE MONEY SAVING OFFERS!**

### **\$40 REBATE COUPON**

- \* Offer good on an order of \$500.00 or more (product & tooling only).
- \* Limit one offer per sales person, per order.
- \* Not to be combined w/any other offer or quote.
- \* Coupon must be attached to order.
- \* Offer expires 12/31/20.
- \* Use code: DS-2020-40

### **FREE DIE COUPON**

- \* Free Die up to \$80.00 net value.
- \* Minimum 2nd column qty.
- \* Limit one offer per sales person, per order.
- \* Not to be combined w/any other offer or quote.
- \* Coupon must be attached to order.
- \* Offer expires 12/31/20.
- \* Use code: DS-2020-FD