

## The Fortune Is in The Follow Up

### Why A Follow Up Program?

There are four stages of the sale process; prospecting, presenting, closing and follow-up. Most salespeople are good (or great) at one, two or sometimes three stages of the process, but not all four stages. This usually depends on their experience, personality type or selling style. Successful sales professionals must be great at all four stages of the sales process to gain maximum results. In my personal experience training and coaching sales professionals across the country, I have found that follow up is the key to sales growth and retention. Unfortunately **over 90% of the time follow up** is the weakest link in the sales process.

### Follow up facts:

58% of all salespeople quit completely after a single call on a prospect.

20% make two calls before giving up.

7% make three calls.

15% make five calls or more.

The 15% of the salespeople that make five calls or more produce about 75% of all the business.

### **A consistent follow-up program creates a predictable and profitable stream of customers that buy, as well as generating referrals.**

Following up with potential and current customers is how repeat business and referrals are generated, but most companies are lacking a program that can be followed consistently. Referrals are the number one key to a six-figure income for the sales professional.

### **7 Touch Follow Up Program:**

It's great when a customer buys a product or service on their first exposure. However marketing experts tell us for most customers to remember (and buy) a product or service they need 5–7 exposures. It's important to touch the prospect by following up 5-7 times in the first 30 days. It is not realistic for salespeople to think that everyone is going to buy the first time after they are exposed to a product or service. Mr. Novak has developed a *7 Touch Follow Up Program* to maximize results for the sales professional.

## **Customer Retention:**

Harvard Business Review reported that companies could increase profits by up to 85% simply by reducing their loss of current customers by 5%. Follow up plays a major role in customer retention.

## **Why is following up negative to sales professionals?**

Let's face it, follow up is avoided and even dreaded by most sales professionals. It is not on the top of any "to do" list. When I ask sales professionals what they think about follow up, I consistently get ONLY negative responses. Some say it's painful for them, others respond "I think I am bugging them", or "if they were interested they would call me", or "they'll think I am pushy", or "maybe I did something wrong during the last call or meeting". Mentally sales professionals conjure up negative thoughts in their mind about what response they will get, when in fact they have no idea what the person's reasons or response will be. Many sales professionals however will follow up on a hot lead but will stop when it turns cold.

Salespeople have admitted to me that whenever it's time to follow up, the excuses start coming up like red flags in their minds. For example, "I need to go get my dry cleaning", "I have to go to Starbucks", "I have to walk the dog", and "it's time to eat". Human nature kicks in because follow up is uncomfortable and most sales professionals will subconsciously do anything to avoid it.

## **Follow up is not negative:**

People have many reasons for not immediately making a desired purchase or giving the desired response. Prospective clients may be shopping around, or procrastinating. Others may be very busy, distracted, or having cash flow issues. They may have just forgotten, or misplaced your business information or it just may be wrong timing. **Most often it takes developing relationships with prospective clients so they feel comfortable in making the purchase.**

Human nature also shows us people respect a business or industry that is organized enough to follow up in a professional manner. It shows the client that the business is interested in them and cares enough to contact them. Following up will separate you from your competitors because most companies don't follow up. The bottom line is when sales professionals follow up, they build relationships and they win customers and sales.

## Benefits of a Follow Up Program to Sales Professionals:

- A consistent productive way to follow up that brings financial rewards and becomes a habit.
- Generate repeat business by keeping in touch with current and prospective clients.
- Develop trust, rapport and long-term relationships with current and prospective clients.
- Separate your company from competitors because most companies don't follow up.
- Build customer loyalty by providing customer service and assuring customer satisfaction. 68% of customers that don't return to a company say that the company never contacted them, was indifferent, or had a poor attitude.
- Generates referrals by showing you still care after the transaction.  
**(the sale starts after the sale)**
- Create and generate positive and ongoing word of mouth advertising about your company. Follow up tells your customers that they are important and then they spread the word. It gives the opportunity to get, or ask for a referral.
- Identify problems that customers have but they didn't complain about. This allows the salesperson to resolve problems, resulting in keeping a customer that would have been lost. Marketers tell us that it costs 5–8 times the amount of money to get a new customer than it does to keep an existing customer satisfied.
- Up to date knowledge of where a prospect is in the sales process. Staying in contact with the prospect allows the sales professional to find out where the prospect is in the sales process. This increases the odds that a client will take action because of correct timing.

**This article may be reprinted provided it appears in its entirety**

**Permission to Reprint:** Tod Novak, President of The Novak Group, © copyright Reprinted by permission of Tod Novak. For additional information about The Novak Group services, and for free resources, visit [www.TodNovak.com](http://www.TodNovak.com) or email us at [Tod@TodNovak.com](mailto:Tod@TodNovak.com)