

Sales Success in Six Easy Steps

Follow these steps to drive successful “closed-loop” business development planning and execution – and achieve revenue-generating results.

By Patricia Block

Marketing and sales go hand in hand. In other words, the impetus is there to market something because, bottom line, you want to sell something, be it a product or service.

Some people advocate building sophisticated business intelligence platforms and CRM (customer relationship management) systems and databases. However, in my humble opinion, many do not place enough emphasis on the basic block-and-tackle required to successfully market and sell something. You can spend a lot of time developing strategies to market your business, but none of that glorious whiteboard visioning will mean a thing unless you follow an easy set of steps that support successful business development planning and sales execution.

I have created many different sales presentations that describe the “closed-loop” approach to marketing and business development that I recommend – but the basic steps are always the same:

- 1. Identify your audience.** To whom do you want to market and sell?
- 2. Build – or buy or rent – a database of these names.** You want to be able to reach out, communicate with and track every contact you make with every one of your clients and prospects. At a minimum, your database should include name, address, phone, email, URL, and a way to track the history of your contact and all interactions.
- 3. Identify the best ways to reach your audience.** What do they read, what industry and community events do they attend, what web sites do they visit, what blogs do they read or post to, where do they hang out in their leisure time, and so on and on.
- 4. Define the activities, ways, and things you can do** to be present, make contact and engage your audience. Reach out through each of these venues so that the opportunity is there for them to notice you and your product/service. The more you can actively engage your audience – i.e., they feel compelled to respond – the better.
- 5. Create a list of milestones and a calendar of activities to engage your target audience.** This means writing a one-page summary for each program that explains the Who, Why, What, When, and How (steps/action items). Next, create a one-page 12-month calendar of these concurrent and consecutive marketing and business development activities, conferences, special events, programs, and so on. And then?
- 6. Execute!** A sale is all about establishing, nurturing and growing relationships. The more your targets experience “personal” interaction on an iterative basis – e.g., a phone call, email, direct mail, meeting you at a special event, seeing you speak or participate on a panel, and so on – the more likely it is that they will keep you and your offering in mind...and, ultimately, buy what you are selling. Also important: share content and ideas that are valuable (not just marketing propaganda). This will gain the confidence of both clients and prospects and help close the deal. **[Brand building and sales through “closed-loop” bus dev and marketing](#)**: keep reaching out and connecting with your target audience, time and time again. Do not consider the loop closed until you have brought on a new client or sold additional services to an existing one.