

How to Make Sales during the Holidays

The Holiday Season is upon us, and for business owners and sales professionals, this time of year adds special challenges for maintaining focus on sales productivity.

The time between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day is critical to any business that wants to start the next year off with a full pipeline of prospects. Many businesses get caught up with the familiar music, parties, seeing old friends, and spending time with my family, make the holidays special. Almost everything about the holidays is fun except - selling. During a joyous season, the sales environment can be brutal. You need to make time for yourself and your family.

During the holidays you and your salespeople struggle to maintain activity targets while prospects and customers routinely put off decisions until the New Year. The good news is, that despite the challenges, you can take control, maintain your focus, and still close deals. The key is staying true to the fundamentals of selling and maintaining self-discipline combined with a sprinkle of creativity.

One of the hardest things about selling during the holiday season is getting customers to act on buying decisions. They say they just want to wait until the New Year to make any decisions. To them, it makes logical sense to wait. Far too many salespeople willingly accept this excuse as logical, too. However, if you've been around selling long enough, you know that by the time you get to January, most of these deals will be cold.

Learn How to Get More Referrals During the Holidays

To have any chance of closing these deals you must strike while the iron is hot. You cannot allow emotions to wane. So, during this time of year, you must give your prospects and customers a more compelling reason to plan now than to wait until later. This means getting creative with your offer, price, value-added services, or signing bonuses. You may have to give up more to get the deal done than during other times of the year.

In sales, like it or not, activity is everything. If you are not prospecting, questioning, presenting, and closing you will fail - no matter what time of year it is. Of course, with all the wonderful (and not-so-wonderful) distractions of the holidays, it can be easy to slack off, and let your self-discipline slip and move away from your normal daily routine.

This slip has two consequences. In the short term, it hurts your closing ratio during December. In the long term, it impacts your sales pipeline during January, February, and March which can have a major impact on your future income.

To keep this from happening to you, it is critical that you sit down with your daily planner right now and ensure that you have your calendar blocked properly for daily prospecting and lead generation, as well as information gathering, presentations, demos, and closing meetings. Consider all your holiday activities and build them into your planner. You may have to do some workarounds, but the key here is to get everything planned out in advance. To stay on track, set daily activity targets and commit to reviewing those targets each morning and afternoon. You will be amazed at how powerful this planning process is for keeping you on track and focused during the holidays.

Most importantly, by planning and developing creative ways to close more business, you will find that you feel less stress, cash bigger commission checks, and have plenty of time to enjoy the holidays with the ones you care about the most.