

## 11 Sales Prospecting Tips to Implement Today

Prospecting isn't easy – in fact, it's the most challenging part of the sales process. Prospecting helps create a pipeline of potential customers who can become qualified leads. **It is very important to remember that prospecting is not selling.** Do not jump the gun and miss out on becoming a trusted advisor, by only talking about your product.

Prospecting is focused on getting a prospect through the first two stages of the sales cycle: **Attention and Interest**. The goal is to get the prospect to say that they are interested to learn more which gets them into the next stage of the cycle – **Desire to buy**. It's also important to target the right contacts and the right people at the businesses you are working with. There are many tools, techniques and tips available that will help you be better at prospecting. A few time tested ones are outlined below.



### 1. Do Your Research - Create the Ideal Customer Profile

Only 13% of buyers feel like salespeople understand their needs - Why? Lack of proper research. To have a personalized and successful conversation, you need to know everything there is to know about your prospect. Firmographics, Industry trends, Competitors, Advertising Avenues and more help you build an efficient and targeted prospect list.

### ***Consider some of these points when qualifying a prospect –***

- Interest vs. Intent – The answer to the question “**who can buy vs. who wants to buy?**” is very important in identifying qualified leads. The best way to look at this is 80% of results come from just 20% of your leads and knowing where the intent lies will allow you to focus 100% of your efforts on the 20%, which will generate valuable returns.
- Key Decision Makers – Your research should definitely include this information. It makes no sense for you to spend valuable time talking to a prospect only to realize that, for all their interest, they are not the right person to make or break the deal.
- Competition Market – Information such as who else the prospect has been talking to regarding this product and what is being offered differently is another crucial piece of data that must be included in your toolbox.

Develop qualifying questions for all your prospects and prioritize the best fit ones right away. With a clearly defined prospect profile, it becomes easier to qualify leads, thereby reducing time and increasing overall effectiveness.

## **2. Send Better Emails – Writing the perfect subject line**

It is not easy to capture a prospect's interest with just a few words or a phrase, but in order for them to open your email you need to come up with a catchy, short yet relevant line that can pique the prospect's interest. Statistics show that 35% of the email recipients open emails based on the subject line alone.

**Subject lines help your email stand out and set expectations about the contents of your email.**

### ***Some points to remember while crafting a really good subject line -***

- Keep it simple and genuine.
- Make it humorous or creative
- Write them with value proposition
- Add lines that create urgency
- Keep them relevant

A subject line can make a lot of difference in whether your email gets opened or ignored. Remember that what worked last month may not work now, so try and be flexible with your phrases. Neat, respectful and purposeful subject lines will not only intrigue your prospect, but also makes sure that your email gets opened.

## **3. Block specific Time for calling - Timing is everything**

If you've been doing this for a while, then you know that there is no perfect time for calling a prospect. An initial email asking for a time works best. Suggest a time, but be prepared for your prospect to specify a different time. Schedule the call in your calendar and send an invite. **The initial call sets the tone of your entire relationship with this prospect and is therefore one of the most important part of prospecting.**

### ***A few tips you can follow to make that call matter -***

- Friendly Greeting
- Active Listening
- Ask probing questions
- Managing Resistance
- Be Professional
- Stay positive till the end.

The goal of your call should be to set an appointment as early as possible and make it easy for the prospect to agree. Propose a few dates and times to meet, not too far in the future and try to get an agreement right away. Pencil that in immediately and follow the call with an email invite.

## **4. Follow Up, follow up – Nurture your Relationship**

80% of sales require at least five follow-ups after the initial contact, but 44% of sales reps give up after one. **You will significantly miss out, if you don't follow up.** Make following up a consistent practice and you will deliver a much better experience to your prospect. Use tracking software to help you remember and keep track of follow ups diligently such that you never miss out on even one.

### ***Things to remember when following up –***

- Be aware of your prospect's availability and call accordingly.
- Provide value add and update your prospect with new information (if any).
- Be persistent but not pushy.
- Clearly define the objectives in each follow up call or email.
- Know when it is time to stop.

Another good point to note is to make sure you have some sort of a low-touch contact or marketing program that allows you to remain in contact with cold leads as well from time to time.

## **5. Explainer Videos - Showcase your skill/product in a video**

A video is shared at least seven times more than links and therefore there is a greater engagement and reach with an explainer video. *59% of senior executives prefer to watch video instead of reading text, if both are available on the same page.* Whether you are trying to talk about a product, software or service a video does a much better job of explaining things than text. Tools and templates available on the internet will help you create an awesome explainer video; to deliver a more lively and personable pitch to capture the prospect's attention.

### ***Some tips to create a killer explainer video-***

- Keep it short and to the point.
- Showcase benefits of your product.

- Add Humor to make it engaging.
- Use people (if possible) to establish an emotional connection.
- Get creative if using animation.
- Set a tone with music.

A video also does a much better job of enticing your prospects and help them understand your value proposition. An advantage of this, is that your sales cycle is reduced due to the educational effect of the video and you will end up with more qualified leads.

## 6. Social Presence - Use Social Media to Your Advantage

LinkedIn is a powerful tool to leverage the art of social selling in a B2B world. The idea is to use social platforms to actually listen to what your customers are saying and then offer them strategic insights or choices as appropriate. Another great method of generating attention is to create native social media content. For example, LinkedIn posts are a great way to share value to your connections.

### ***Three simple tips to prospecting with LinkedIn -***

- Use LinkedIn Groups
- Use the Advanced Search
- Pay for InMail

**Social selling also provides an opportunity to nurture your prospects across several channels.**

Twitter, LinkedIn and even Facebook are there for you to build and keep the relationship going even after a deal is made.

## 7. Automate your Sales Efforts - Use Technology to your Advantage

There are a wide range of technologies available that help you find, monitor, and understand information on your prospects' and existing clients' daily business. There are many sales prospecting tools and technological solutions that go beyond CRM software. For example, Google Alerts allows you to track keywords that are relevant to your prospects.

### ***Ways in which technology can be better used -***

- Log calls in CRM and be organized.
- Use meeting scheduling software to schedule your meetings.
- Define criteria used for scoring into lead-scoring software to trigger automated marketing campaigns
- Automate your follow-up emails using tools to send a series of timed and/or tailored emails to your prospects.

It is a fact that prospecting is hard work. You invest a lot of time and effort into getting the best out of your prospects. But by using some of the many tools available to help you with Automated lead generation or Email automation and/or Social Media Management, you can prospect better and more effectively than before.

## 8. Maximize website visits - Publish Engaging and Relevant content

According to a survey by Corporate Visions, 60% of B2B marketing and sales professionals say that their organization's demand generation campaigns focus only on their own company's products, features, and services—rather than focusing on their prospect's challenges or pain points. **It is not just about your product or your company anymore.** Identify areas and topics that talk about challenges in the industry, market trends and general information to help your prospects to improve their business and create blogs, articles or whitepapers and publish them on your website.

***Some examples of useful content you can share to warm up your leads are:***

- An article that talks about common challenges in their industry and tips to overcome them.
- A blog or a whitepaper on how your product can help in specific areas of their business along with a link to sign up for a free trial.

Providing valuable content maximizes a prospect's engagement on your website and increases customer retention and Google ranking.

## 9. Build Relationships - Ask for Referrals and Recommendations

"In these interconnected days, how your customers feel about you and what they are prepared to tell others about you can influence your revenues and profits significantly." quoted a Harvard Business review article. **Happy prospects spread the word.** Asking for a referral immediately after a sale, is effective especially if the sales experience was a positive one. Create a referral program and offer incentives and rewards to receive more leads.

***Few ways to incentivize -***

- Offer Free Credits
- Provide Priority Support
- Cash Incentives
- Offer Coupons and Vouchers to value added services

Staying in touch with your prospect long after a deal is completed, is also another way to ensure the prospects are happy with your service and provide more referrals.

## 10. Tie it all together - Build, Maintain and Audit Sales Pipeline

Sales pipeline is essentially a specific set of steps taken to convert a prospect into a qualified lead. **It is very important to develop relationships with your prospects at every stage of the sales funnel through every step of the prospect's journey.** It is equally important to regularly audit this process so that you can be prepared to spot trends both positive and negative and correct them accordingly.

### ***Ways to nurture and audit your pipeline -***

- Timely Follow Ups
- Personalized emails
- Social Media Marketing
- Lead Scoring
- Review quality of your leads.
- Review existing content, tools and resources.

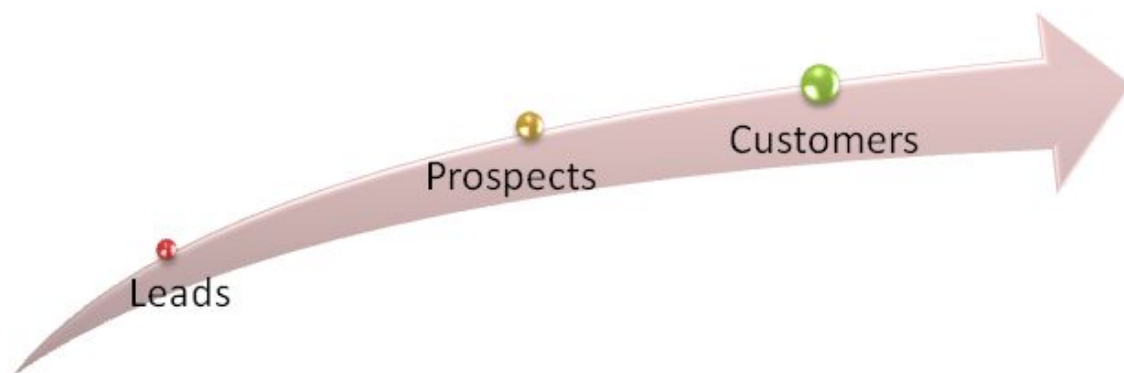
Nurture your prospects such that you can build a long-lasting relationship with them, which will benefit both you and them. Understand that selling is a dynamic process that needs to be reviewed and audited regularly. Remember that the success of an enterprise depends on how successful its selling process is.

## **11. Be Consistent - Prospecting is ongoing**

Prospecting is not something you do in the eleventh hour, but it needs to be a regular habit. **Do it everyday.** Statistics show that being consistent yields more results and you will have highly qualified leads who are ready to buy. To become successful at prospecting, book time for prospecting every single day.

### ***Consider these tips to be consistent -***

- Treat prospecting as a priority - Do not procrastinate.
- Set aside time in the mornings - so that you can finish your sales prospecting early.
- Focus - turn off distractions.
- Use every channel available - phone, email or social media.



Sales Prospecting is not rocket science. There are no quick formulas for being successful at prospecting. But you can save time and maximize your returns if you invest in the right process and skills. Add in these tips into your prospecting game and you'll be able to build and maintain relationships with prospects that will turn into qualified leads over time. The ball is in your court. Happy Prospecting!