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Marketing 101: Telephone Skills

Inbound Calls

This is extremely important stuff, but probably because it isn't flashy like website design and development, it gets overlooked by a lot of people when they're thinking about their marketing.

When you're evaluating your company's marketing, see the whole thing as a network of associations and contacts. Each part of the system has to work, and the phone is huge-- both how it works and how you use it.

Let me explain:

Let's say that you've done an A+ job with your website. You have used great pictures and text to explain to your key customers and prospects why they should be doing business with you. You have an 800 number piggy-backed to your main business line. You have a voice mail system as part of this that works flawlessly. You've called yourself up and tested your message to make sure that it says what you want it to say, and that it works the way it is supposed to for your customers. You also understand and use call-forwarding to your wireless phone when you are out of the office.

But let's say that your wireless provider is one of those companies that every so often will download your voicemails a day later than people actually leave them. No, it's not your imagination-- it does happen. And because you're busy, you don't really notice it at first. The question to ask yourself is this:

If you're not receiving your voicemails, and you're not returning your calls as soon as humanly possible, what is the perception in the potential customer's mind?

You could be the best at what you do, delivering unparalleled service at a great price, and you could be communicating this extremely effectively through your business cards, referrals, website, etc.... but because one link in the chain was weak, the customer went somewhere else.

It happens every day.

Make all the elements in your system work. Make sure the phone number posted on your website is the correct one. Make sure your voicemail works properly, and that you have an appropriate message on it for callers. Make sure you understand how to forward calls, and that this works the way you need it to work.

Outbound Calls

Even though the purpose of this website is to communicate the value of letting us have the responsibility of helping you with your web-marketing, we can tell you without any hesitation that it is the telephone that will make you the most money.

The telephone will make you money, but only if you learn to use it as a tool for finding new customers. We recommend strongly that you take a look at the current customer base you have and ask the question: How can I get more customers like these. Usually, the most effective, most time-efficient method of expanding your customer base is to find other prospective customers who match the profile of your current customers... and just call them up.

Sales is no mystery. It's all about communicating value. Many people who own small businesses have a negative association with the word "SALES". But let's face it-- that's how a business can grow. If you're uncomfortable with the term, maybe you can just think of it as "Telling a story". In effect, that's what you're doing every time you call a prospective customer and tell them about yourself. If you can get comfortable with calling people and asking for the decision-maker and then telling your story, you might find this has a positive effect on your bank account balance.