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White Paper Sample

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Working Title

The New Rules to Getting Appointments with VPs and CEOs
Cold calls and emails don't work anymore. This does…

Nutshell Summary

Today 71% of VPs and CEOs rely on their professional networks to learn about new products and services, according to a survey by *SoftwareCEO.com*. By comparison, only 7% use cold calls and emails to influence their decision-making. Networking works and you can get more leads by teaching a new, more effective approach. One software company increased their appointment-setting success rate by 18%. This White Paper will describe a new, innovative approach and best practices for targeting, making that critical first contact and how to follow up. It will also outline how to get your sales team up-to-speed quickly to skyrocket their leads conversion success rates.

Overview/Expanded Summary/Executive Summary

- Start talking about the problem, goal or issue. Expand on the nutshell, give gist of paper so a busy professional can read or scan this and have a clear idea what this white paper is about. State the problem, describe the solution and give the conclusion that will be made in the paper.

Provide Additional Background if Needed

Problem

Sales teams today - even the best, hard working teams - are not getting the lead conversion results they want. This leads to a lack of motivation from not making the commissions they hoped to make, lack of team moral from negative rather than positive reinforcement and a dent rather than an upward, high-arching curve in the bottom line of a company's sales and profit margins. Why? They are following an outdated formula of using emails and cold calls as their primary lead generation tools. Busy executives are not answering the phone anymore, good luck getting a call back and emails are sent to the spam folder.

According to a survey by *Professional Sales Journal,* "82% of sales directors of B2B companies report that email prospecting is somewhat or significantly less effective effective than five years ago". Overworked CEOs and VPs are overwhelmed with email and setting yourself apart from the crowd by adding to the influx of unwanted unsolicited messages in their inbox they already get will not get results - no matter how catchy the subject heading.

The new approach for successful lead generation is networking. Quoted from an article in *Journal of Professional Selling and Sales Management*: "... networking, if done correctly, is fast becoming the most reliable means of getting that all-important first handshake with a new prospect."

Put down the phone, hang tight with the mouse and take the time to learn a new strategy for making connections and starting relationships with the decision-makers you need to influence and impress.

<u>The Solution</u>

The networking skills your sales team needs to learn are five-fold: targeting, getting introduced, making the first contact, timing and followup. Each is explained in detail below to assist you in getting your team off the phone, averse to email pitches that are no longer effective and on their way to making that crucial first sales lead handshake.

1. **Targeting**

Who do you need to get in front of and how can you do it. You have this process already started with that list of executives and CEOs your team has already diligently flushed out and sent emails to plus cold called for weeks on end but rarely received a reply.

Your team is now going to hit it home by taking some of these qualified sales leads and try again to connect using your newly implemented networking tactics. And they are going to find new, key decision-makers to target who have a strong possibility of wanting to purchase or invest in the product or technology.

2. **Getting introduced**

Bob Richardson, author of *Networking that Grows Sales*, makes this salient point about the importance of getting introduced: “These days the old cliché has become a reality. It is ‘who you know’.”

In getting introduced your team needs to move beyond family, friends, professional organizations and everyone they’ve grabbed a business card from at the numerous professional sales meetings you pay for them to attend every year to sourcing outside contacts who have no clue who they are.

Then they want to move from ‘new to known’ and as quickly as possible. They want to become a familiar, trustworthy and reliable face. Not a random voice on a cell phone or an electronic message conveyer. Then leverage this personalized contact by asking for introductions to new potential quality leads and referrals.

3. Methods for making first contact

For making that necessary first contact there are two primary best practice methods: have sales intelligence sleuthed out about the targeted lead you are attempting to contact and make it personal. Linkedin and social media can be used for lead-ins for establishing rapport with a prospective client but there has to be more meat than fluff in the communications.

Over-communicate these methods at the start as your team is learning to implement these new networking techniques. Not to the point of boredom or so overdone it triggers an office revolt, but with weekly group meetings or group conference calls to help focus on the changes in work structure you’ve defined and are asking of them to adapt as new best practices.

4. Timing: When to go for the meeting

Best practices for when to arrange that first meeting are intuitive and practical in nature. Your sales team already has the innate ability to know when to push and when to pull back in requesting a face to face informal or formal meet up with a prospect. However, they may now need to be more methodical.

The new networking system you’ve put in place should follow some clear guidelines. Clarity in how each member is handling prospects will not only give you the opportunity to more easily judge what is working optimally and what tweaking may be needed but will allow you to quantify results.

When to initiate a face to face meeting should be laid-out clearly for all team members and based on input from your most experienced and senior salespersons.

5. **Follow-up**

Your sales team has this down but are now going to have more opportunity to implement it. Being a familiar face and trustworthy source that has made contact with the prospect in a personalized way, shown the value of the technology or service your team is selling with your high-end marketing material allows for quicker and more active follow-up attempts.

The salesperson has less chance of being shoved-off and more opportunity to reinitiate contact. A known face is more appealing to a prospect than an anonymous one with a fancy company logo behind it.

Conclusion

You now have new, efficient and effective networking practices in place to connect with key decision makers and initiate a personal-professional connection. Keep implementing the above steps and keep moving forward with it. Test the process as your team learns and implements it, adjusting as needed to get the best results. Use feedback from your team on what is working and what may need more focused attention.

Expected Results of the Solution

- What measurable outcome can be expected from implementing the solution? Use statistics, numbers, case studies of performance results, customer success stories if possible. Can make-up a company and give a fictitious story as long as is realistic.

Recommend Next Steps

- If they are interested in the solution, what should they do next? Map out some steps.

Pitch Page

- Put on a separate page. Is a promotional blurb/pitch for the client. Can use product or service name, talk it up, brag, etc. Is the salesy part, rest of paper should be more neutral, unbiased and impartial - you talk about product or service but not directly name it. Here you can and even include promotional offer, etc. Get copy from marketing team if company has one. Include client name and contact info.

References

This white paper sample was devised from *The Writer's Den* bootcamp by Steve Slaunwhite, "Learn to Write White Papers".

Sources for quotes:

1. SoftwareCEO.com. 2014 Survey: *How CEOs Make Buying Decisions*.
2. Professional Sales Journal. 2*015 Survey On Prospecting Activities.*
3. Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management. Issue 92. *Are Sales Forces Relying too Heavily on Email?*
4. Interview with Bob Richardson, author of *Networking That Grows Sales*.