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ALTERNATIVE

MARKETING // ADVERTISING // PUBLIC RELATIONS

# HOW TO MARKET DURING A PANDEMIC

## Week 4: Adapting your sales strategy

**It wasn't that long ago we were able to travel to meet clients, shake hands and attend networking events.**

Now, you may be reading this trying to prepare for another company Zoom call while your kids are watching Netflix or attempting to finish another e-learning assignment across the table from you. Prospects you had may be harder to reach or, worse, even laid off as their company has to temporarily or permanently close their doors.

We're all trying to make sense of the everchanging situation and adjust our work routines, communication methods, marketing tactics and sales processes to survive.

**This is especially essential for small business owners.**

Small business owners are integral in our local communities, accounting for more than 40% of the U.S. economic activity and creating 2/3 of net new jobs. [Source](#)

If you're not already pivoting your sales model during the COVID-19 pandemic, you need to get moving. Now is the time to think of the future. Making changes in your sales approach today will set you up to succeed in the coming months.

### **Consider the following questions:**

If your business has been deemed "non-essential," what are you doing to stay in front of your customers? If your business is "essential" are you doing everything you can to keep your sales pipeline streaming?

### **Adapting to the "new normal"**

Can you pivot your business online through social media, an email contact list or website? Take pictures of products, allow customers to pay through online invoices and mail purchases, deliver within a certain mileage radius or, create a safe pick up space at your storefront.

If your business is service oriented, can you provide virtual consultations with customers to make them feel connected to your business until you can meet in person? Or, if your business has been deemed an "essential" business, have you over-communicated with your clients to let them know that you are still operating and you are taking every precaution to keep them safe?

While most of your thoughts are about today and tomorrow, it is important to take time to plan ahead for next month and beyond, so you can be prepared to rebuild once this crisis is over.

**Now is the time to evaluate and fine-tune your sales process.**

## **DETERMINE THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAY TO SELL**

A documented sales process is a flowchart that outlines the distinct steps your prospects take before becoming a customer.

This gives you a powerful tool to use in forecasting, revenue reporting and to help your team sell more efficiently.

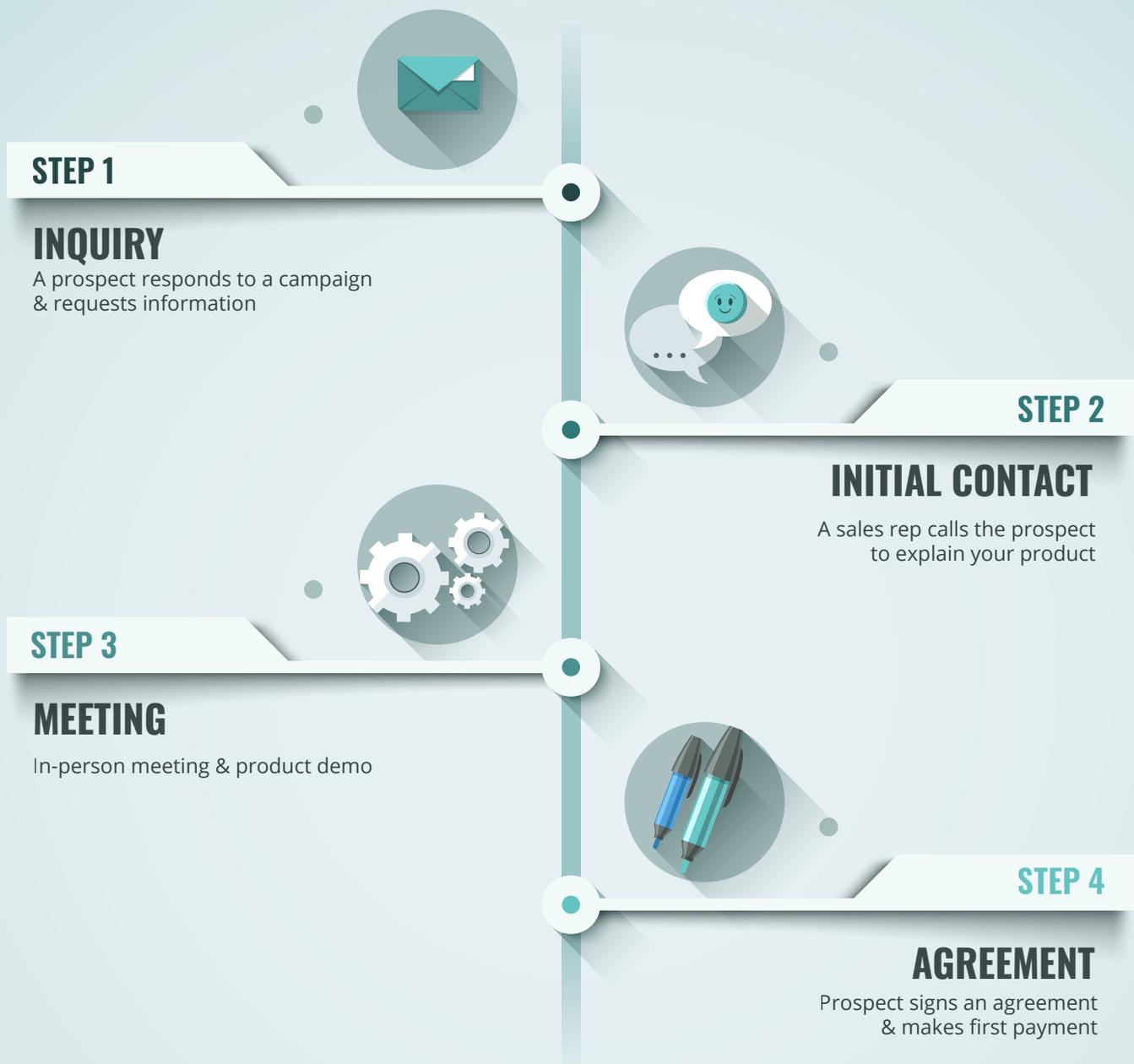
You may have distinct sales processes for each product or service and distribution channel. Analyzing each to evaluate each distinct step a prospect takes, the knowledge that you deliver at each step, the length of time it takes for the prospect to move to the next step and your conversion rates will help you determine your current selling effectiveness.

# DETERMINE CURRENT SELLING EFFECTIVENESS

How do prospects handle the decision to purchase your product or service? Does a single decision maker find your product and buy on the spot, or does s/he go through many steps and approvals first? Perhaps there are multiple people or departments involved in the decision, each with their own needs?

A sales process is a defined series of steps you follow as you guide prospects from initial contact to purchase. It begins when you first identify a new prospect, or when the prospect engages with you. It's far more common in B2B than B2C, but some B2C offerings have a distinct sales process.

**Here's a B2B example:**



### **Your process should also explain:**

- » Each distinct step a prospect takes
- » Knowledge the prospect needs to move to the next step
- » Literature & tools you provide to help the prospect move forward
- » Average length of time a prospect needs at each step
- » Conversion rates: the percentage of prospects that move from one step to the next

## **MATCH YOUR SALES PROCESS TO HOW YOUR CUSTOMERS BUY**

Does your current selling process match your buyers' decision-making process? The most effective "internal" sales processes (meaning the ones you define) match the external buyers' process (the steps that the buyers take to make a purchase decision).

Consider the following questions to determine whether this subject is relevant and helpful for you. If you have multiple offerings & distribution channels, apply these questions to each. (This exercise is more relevant to B2B marketers than to most B2C marketers.)

- » Do you have a documented sales process?
- » Is your process geared around the buyer's needs rather than how you prefer to sell?
- » Do you truly understand the buyer's goals at each step in the process?
- » Does each piece of literature and each sales tool deliver the specific information a prospect needs at that particular step?
- » Do you know how many prospects you have at each step and the % of prospects that move forward past that step?
- » If you answered yes to the question above, can you break it down by individual sales rep?
- » Do you need ideas for improving your conversion rates from step to step?
- » Do you successfully recycle the leads that fall out of your pipeline?
- » Do you know how many prospects you need to fill the pipeline each month or quarter in order to meet your revenue goals?
- » Do you need templates for reports to measure your progress?
- » Do you know how efficient your sales reps are?
- » Do you know how an additional hour of selling time will impact your revenue goals?

# DIRECT SALES PLAN

Once you have your sales process down, start to think about a direct sales plan.

Why is a direct sales plan part of a marketing plan? Your marketing strategy, as a whole, covers all the activities focused on generating revenue. The sales function is an important piece of it!

Take a few minutes to outline your direct sales goals, your top prospects and your plans for sales reps, as well as any sales tools and literature you'll need to create, and key dates and milestones of your sales plan.

**We've created a tool to help you!**

## DIRECT SALES GOALS

What are the quarterly numbers you need to hit? Do you have individual goals for your sales department? Determine number of new clients, monthly sales goals or other details here.

## TOP PROSPECTS

Look at your list of customer segments and determine any specific prospects that you need to go after. If you need any special tools or resources to land these accounts, note them below.

**If you're B2B, you might wish to list the company names. If you're B2C, you may wish to list your customer segments or retail outlets.**

## **SALES REP PLAN**

How many sales reps do you need? What are their roles in the sales process? List how territories may be set up, compensation details and any other important plans for the year.

**If you're B2C, you may or may not have anything to list here.**

## **TOOLS/RESOURCES NEEDED**

What kind of tools can you create to guide your prospects through the sales process and convert them to customers? What is your budget for these tools? Explain what is needed to execute your plans.

## **KEY DATES & MILESTONES**

Finally, identify any key dates and milestones for your direct sales plan:

While evaluating and creating a new sales process may initially seem daunting, remind yourself that you are working on your business now to come out stronger.

## WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO HELP YOUR CONSUMERS THROUGH THIS TIME?

Right now, all norms are out the window. **In the end, it's all about helping each other.**

If you know of a customer who has health problems, have you contacted them to see if they need groceries or other essentials picked up? Have you called any current, past or prospective clients just to check in and make sure they are okay? Sometimes the best sale or marketing strategy is just being a good person. And while you are not profiting from your good deeds, know that referrals and relationships are upheld and built during the most trying times.

**Let's be there for one another, no matter what, and help our small businesses survive.**

## WANT TO DIVE DEEPER INTO YOUR SALES STRATEGY?

APRIL 21, 2020

WEBINAR: CONVERTING LEADS INTO  
SUCCESSFUL SALES

PRESENTED BY:  
NATALIE MENKE  
INSPIRE RESULTS BUSINESS COACHING

**EXECUTIVE  
SPEAKER**  
S E R I E S

Join us virtually on Tuesday, April 21st, as local business coach and sales expert Natalie Menke discusses common sales challenges and effective prospecting plans you can implement to close sales quickly and consistently. [Register for free](#) and have this valuable webinar resource delivered right to your inbox!