

Visionary Leadership

Creating Your Top 10 Lists For Business Development

by Ronald E. Lang

Leaders are visionaries, not dreamers. As a visionary, you need to think strategically, but act tactically. Typically leaders do not get involved in the details, but the only way to understand what does or doesn't work is to understand the details, specifically the business development process. Make sure the customer service group is included in the business development process since it is typically an untapped source of revenue for many companies.

As a leader, being proactive is what makes you successful and drives the company forward to meeting and hopefully exceeding your goals. The times you are reactive or spending too much time on issues is when the company slows or impedes growth. A leader delegates and lets people more qualified than them to get things done at a tactical level. Business development is a spirited combination of strategic and tactical thinking, planning and execution. Ask yourself the following questions:

1. When was the last time you thanked someone for a referral?

2. Do you thank your customers for renewing their contracts with your company?

3. Did you send a fruit/flower/gift basket to a large account that was getting service from a competitor and is now your customer?

4. Was a thank you card sent to a prospect the last time you met with them?

What are you doing about testimonials? This is the second most effective form of advertisement for your company (other than a referral). This is another idea to show your customer that you not only want their business, but want to show it off to others. Many customers like being a showcase for "state-of-the-art" technology and could actually be a great advocate for your company by taking a prospect for an on-site visit. Add a line item in your terms section of your contract that you need a testimonial letter within 60 days after in-

stallation is completed.

Sometimes you have to break the rules in order to develop a preemptive action to acquire, retain and expand your customer base. Identify who the "big" thinkers are in your company and solicit their feedback on new and fresh ideas to increase and build your business. If you're a leader and more of a dreamer than a visionary, then you might be successful more by luck than anything else. Put your ideas on paper, narrow it down to 10 items and prioritize them. Once you have your consolidated Top 10 List, develop an action plan around it, assign and delegate tasks, make sure you are measuring these results on a monthly basis. Remember if you can't measure it, you can't manage it! Many ideas on your Top 10 lists won't even cost any money. Probably many of the ideas are just process or operational modifications.

The issue with new ideas is that there is shift to the existing culture. Remember, everyone wants

Top 10 Ways To Increase Sales

1. Develop a standardized sales process.
2. Identify who you want to do business with.
3. Identify who you don't want to do business with.
4. Use multiple marketing methods to connect with prospects.
5. Make sure your sales team knows what differentiates you from the competition.
6. Make your sales team identify the key contacts that are making the decision.
7. Question all RFP's whether or not they are worthwhile to respond to.
8. Partner with other businesses that complement yours for better networking.
9. Strengthen your relationships with your manufacturers.
10. Automate, Automate, Automate

progress, nobody wants change. Developing breakthrough strategies can be a difficult and daunting task.

Ronald E. Lang (rlang@majestictechnology.com) is president of Majestic Consulting Group, developers of AVLogix sales and customer service automation software.