



## THE “TENN” WAYS TO PROSPER SMALL BUSINESS SERIES

### “10 Ways to Sell More”

The year 2009 will be a tough one for almost every businesses, large and small. So unless you are a pawnbroker or bankruptcy attorney, two business categories that will likely thrive in the coming months, it may be worth a moment of your time to review what you and your sales team have been doing to generate sales in the past to see if there are more effective ways to sell more of your products and services in the coming year.

It has become my habit to begin this type of review with clients by beginning with the fundamentals. I tell them of a story I read many years ago about the great UCLA (yes, I am a Bruin) basketball Coach John Wooden. A story was told that he would recruit the best, most experienced and talented winning high school players from across the country to build his championship teams. And then, on the first day of team practice, he would gather up these all stars and spend / invest the first 30 minutes reviewing with each player how they tied their shoelaces. Yes, shoelaces. The Coach did not want his team to miss an opportunity to win because of something as fundamental as a loose shoelace.

Therefore, in homage to the great Coach, I encourage you to begin your sales review of your selling processes with the fundamentals of salespersonship. May I suggest the following “10 ways to sell more” for your consideration:

1. Never say “May I help you?”. This sales line nearly always generates a “no thanks” so stop using it.
2. Instead, begin your selling process by looking your potential customer in the eye, put a smile on your face and say “Hello, my name is Ben”. This will likely get a reply in return of “Hi, my name is \_\_\_\_”. A conversation has begun allowing you to ask the key questions of that potential customer to learn what they are looking for and how you might be able to fill their needs.
3. If your products or services are any good, give some away. Sampling your wares is a tried and true approach to selling nearly everything. It demonstrates your confidence in your products or services while allowing potential customers to ‘try before they buy’. It really works and can be one of the most cost effective and powerful selling processes available.
4. Work the trade shows. It does not matter if you are new to the business or have been established for years, trade shows provide one of the most cost effective ways to learn about your competition (or as refer to them ‘the evil competition’), related products and services, new trends and fresh ideas from

- people and businesses that really understand what you do and how you do it. And you also get to meet with your colleagues (those are the folks that are in your business but may be geographically distant or otherwise do not directly compete against you) to share information openly so you can learn from each other. All this good sales information can be gained whether or not you exhibit but you must attend to get the benefits.
5. Always start with your existing customers. If you sell products or services of worthy quality for a fair price backed by decent or better customer service, then it will always be easier and more effective to sell more to your current customers than to sell your first order to a new customer. Your current customers know you and you know them, so you will have easier access to a sales conversation to talk about new opportunities to expand your business together. New customers are great and necessary to grow most businesses but they can be tough / expensive to take away from your evil competitors.
  6. The more hours you sell the more sales you will get. This is overly simple, but if you are already doing a pretty good job of the selling process, the next logical stop is to do more of it. Spend / invest more time selling and watch the results.
  7. Paying commissions can be a good thing. If you lack the confidence or funds right now to hire more sales people as employees, consider adding commissioned sales reps, both locally and outside the local area. These commissioned sales people can reach those important new customers you could not reach by yourself. If your products or services are good enough, these commissioned reps can really rack up your sales volume.
  8. Train your sales people. And that includes yourself. Whoever is representing your company and its products or services should have good product and company policy knowledge in addition to knowing the industry in which you work. And of course, it is vital that every salesperson knows as much as possible about their customers to ensure they can serve their needs while also serving the needs of your company.
  9. No blue suede shoes. Always be honesty, trustworthy and honorable in dealing with your customers. It will benefit you in both the short and long term.
  10. Remember to ask for the order. Yes, you gotta ask.

The selling process can be simple or complex, brief or it can take months to close, costly or cheap, challenging or easy. Regardless, when you remember it is a process and that thoughtful hard work can really pay off, you too can maximize the opportunities of prosperity even during this recession economy.

Ben Tenn of Tenn Consulting provides small business management consulting with an emphasis on marketing and sales and leads the highly recognized "The *Tenn* Ways to Prosper" small business seminar series.

Tenn, after earning an MBA from UCLA, has enjoyed 35 successful years of business experience as a corporate executive and small business owner including 11 years at The Walt Disney Co., 13 years as a business consultant and as an Instructor at UCLA Extension. For more information, call 818 993 8222 or email [btenn@yahoo.com](mailto:btenn@yahoo.com).