

Selling Today

Advice on how to become more than just another vendor

BY HARRISON GREENE

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If you are a salesperson you have probably heard someone say, “Cold calling is impossible. No one answers the phone or returns e-mail. When I do get through to someone, it is usually an assistant who screens me out or says they are not interested, goodbye.”

While it always has been a challenge to get through to the prospect with whom you want to speak, that challenge has become much more difficult today because technology has replaced the salesperson in the initial stages. People can now find suppliers and service providers with ease. People who buy do the hunting. The salesperson must become the hunted. Search engines have become the new normal. Calls from salespeople are not needed nor wanted in the search for a new supplier or service provider.

Game Changers

When prospective clients search, will they find your company? When they find more service providers or suppliers than they can possibly contact, will your company be the one they recognize? Do you think that because they might have purchased from you years ago that they will automatically remember you? Dream on. Your product or service has now become commodity; a place from which they can conduct a transaction. If they can't transact with you, they scroll down to the next company in their search.

Marketing can drive customers toward you in ways never before possible. Dismiss it if you will, but business/social media sites will determine your success in the near future. These tools should enhance — not replace — traditional marketing. Business and social media must play an

increasingly larger part in your marketing initiatives if you are to become the hunted. Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter are an integral part of marketing strategy. You would have probably scoffed when someone told you that radio and television advertising would give newspapers a run for their money, or

that the Internet would never become a place where many people would actually buy anything. And who would have ever thought that text messaging would become more popular than cell phones?

From Hunted To Advisor

Once your prospects find you, then what? Now the dynamics must change if you have any hope of becoming more than the least expensive supplier or service provider. You must negate the transactional nature of having been hunted and transform it into a relationship ... real fast. You must be able to provide information, create a relationship, and become a real advisor to this hunter. You must be able to use new tools to communicate and build a relationship with the prospect who found you. If you do, you will become more than a ven-



dor. You will become a consultative sales person — a trusted advisor. Vendors get shopped and dropped. Trusted advisors get invited to the next level.

So ask yourself: What is your strategy for becoming the hunted and not the hunter? Are you willing to invest the time to learn how to effectively use these new technology tools? Do you know how to leverage being found into a meaningful relationship with those who found you so that you can become a trusted advisor who can help lead them to the solution they need?

Your future success depends on knowing the answers to these questions. If you don't, get busy or someone will eat your lunch. ■

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