



Top Producer Quarterly Newsletter

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In This Issue

7 Ways to Say Thank You

By Bob Martel

What has happened to the lost art and etiquette of thanking customers in some appropriate way? The words 'thank you' creates a magical effect on people, much like hearing their own name properly spoken (or spelled correctly in a mailing).

How well are you "touching the customer" after the sale? Are you making a memorable and timely impression that moves them along that coveted lifetime value continuum? Are you doing anything whatsoever to help the customer realize they made the right purchase decision, and fight off those dreaded post-purchase blues? Too many marketers focus only on programs designed to acquire new customers and they take existing customers for granted. The benefits of a personalized thank you program should be obvious yet very few marketers budget 'thank you' into their plans.

Thanking your customers is a powerful strategy for turning the one-time buyer into a longer-term customer and a fountain of referrals. Try these proven methods:

1. Thank high value customers: All customers are not created equal. An annual handwritten thank you note to your "top twenty percent" from the CEO is a smart strategy.
2. Thank lost customers with a private "win back" offer: A handwritten note to welcome them back, with an irresistible offer works well. Reactivating past customers is one of those forgotten fundamentals.
3. Thank and sell: A handwritten note with a customizable gift certificate is a proven winner and can move inventory or get a plant to capacity!
4. Thank with a gift: Induce reciprocity and stimulate a sale or referral! A thank you gift works wonders. Think high perceived value.
5. Thank and save the sale: Beat the cognitive dissonance demons by reassuring the customer. Great for any high ticket item. Offer an add-on sale while you are at it!
6. Thank and cross-sell: A handwritten note to tell your best customers about a new product or service, with an offer unavailable elsewhere.
7. Thank the non-buyer: A handwritten note to the non-buying prospect of a high ticket item can influence a sale when the prospect is ready to purchase.

Make "thank you" a strategic and conscious component in your marketing program and invest in the lifetime value of the relationships you have already established. The challenge, of course, is to implement a timely and sincere thank you program at a reasonable marketing cost. At the end of the day, it's all about direct marketing mathematics but aren't your best customers worth a couple of bucks for you to show your sincere appreciation?

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Profiles of Success
Bill McMillan

Quotit
LEAD EXCHANGE

Buy & Sell Leads Online

Access New Reliable
Leads Updated Daily

Find Out More Today!

The 2-Step Lead Generation Machine

By John Jantsch

Tired of chasing down leads that don't really want what you have to sell? Use a 2-step advertising approach and your leads will practically beg to do business with you.

Cold calling doesn't work, it's no fun and often you end up with leads, or worse yet, clients, that don't really value what you do. Having said that, leads are the lifeblood of growth, without a lead, there is no client.

Set-up a 2-step lead machine and you can say goodbye to cold calling while generating all of the qualified, permission based leads you can handle. The basic idea behind the 2- step approach is to create one or more valuable reports, workshops, evaluations, trial products, checklists, newsletters, courses or tip sheets. You know, something like, "How To Tell If Your Roofing Contractor Is Lying To You" or "What Every Senior Must Know About Bush's Social Security Changes" or "101 More Things You Can Do With Your iPod."

Now that you have your value packed written report or audio CD, every bit of your advertising – that's Yellow Pages, direct mail, back of your business card, letterhead, email signature, web site – should focus on getting people to pick up, request or download that report. Don't try to do anything else with your advertising, let the report sell you. See, that's step 1.

There are several reasons that this approach is so much more effective for the small business owner than the traditional "image" type advertising.

First off, if you only buy a 2 x 3 ad or send a 4 x 6 postcard, can you really tell your story very well?

Secondly, this approach allows you to demonstrate your expertise in a non-threatening, on the prospect's own terms, way. Nobody likes to be sold to, but if they take the time to read your report, understand what you do that has value, have an 8-10 page conversation with you, the relationship and trust has begun.

A person who has requested your free information is officially a hot lead. When a prospect visits your web site they are effectively raising their hand and identifying themselves as someone who is very interested in what you do. Half of your sales job is done!

If your advertising is focused on gathering the lead into the free report funnel, then your sales efforts are focused on taking that group and only that group that raised their hands and taking them to the next step in the process. That may be an appointment or just a series of more advanced mailings. By the way that's step 2.

So let's recap.

1. Create a free information product that your target market would see as a valuable read or listen.
2. Advertise the free report in everything you do.
3. Capture the names and emails of those who request the report.
4. Follow-up on those leads

If you take this advice to heart, everything about how you market your business will change. Finding new business will become a much more rewarding and valuable experience.

--- John Jantsch is a marketing coach, author and creator of the Duct Tape Marketing System. His website is www.ducttapemarketing.com

Profiles of Success: Bill McMillan

This spring, we interviewed long time Quotit customer Bill McMillan. Bill explains how his business sense and use of Quotit have helped him build a health insurance agency from the domain name up over the past eight years.

Tell me a little about your agency and what insurance lines you market.

We do Health and Life, Individual and Families, and group – our biggest line is individual. And, because of some of the health reform issues ahead, we started to write casualty as well. In fact, we sold a pretty big agency back in 1983 and recently got back into casualty because of the changes coming up.

We figure we have about another four years to sell with the changes coming up and we'll be ready. We're not worried about it, so we're diversifying. In fact, we started to write medical in 1986 and I've been an agent since 1967. My Dad sold his first policy in the property casualty side back in 1931.

We're a husband and wife team with some employees who have been with us as long as eight years now, and we always have a young person in college working with us as an intern as well.

We do a lot of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Texas, but write pretty much all of the carriers. We write all over the state of Texas but were located in Pasadena, a suburb of Houston, in South East Harris County. In fact we've been in the top fifty agencies selling Blue Cross Blue Shield for many years and then the internet caught on and made the competition a lot tougher.

Q How has your agency changed the way you do business in the last few years?

A We use mostly referrals, yellow pages and the internet. We tried some email campaigns for awhile but they weren't effective for; folks were trying get people to our website through search and what not. I just didn't see it as that effective.

Q What types of traditional marketing do you use?

A We are really involved in the community and we get a lot of referrals. In fact, while a lot of brokers we know were having trouble getting business at the end of last year and early this year, from November through February, we've increased our business. We call people, we follow up with them, we will mail them something, and we will still follow up.

Q What expectations do you have when running a marketing campaign?

A When we did some email internet campaigns we were supposed to get more hits. We worked with a company out in California and spent about \$1000 a month and they would send me leads that were also being sent to a lot of other agents. It just didn't work for us.

Q How do you provide proposals for customers?

A People mostly go to our website and fill out an application and then we follow up with them, call them, mail them something, we don't just wait for something to happen on the internet. We're very involved with our customers.

Q What led you to look for other ways to market and sell insurance?

A The internet caught on and made the competition tougher. People could get information a lot faster and they wanted to do it on line. We recognized that and got involved with Quotit and it's been great. Our presence on the internet with our community style of customer service keeps us competitive and successful.

"Quotit has been great to work with. They helped us get a website going. They're responsive to our needs and help us make changes and handle our website. If we need to make more changes and things, we just call them up and we get it done."

-Bill McMillan, McMillan Agency

Q How has Quotit helped your agency?

A Quotit has been great to work with. They helped us get a website going. They're responsive to our needs and help us make changes and handle our website. If we need to make more changes and things, we just call them up and we get it done.

Q How has your business benefited from Quotit's proposal system?

A I'm a niche marketer and like to get quotes to people right away.

Q What percentage of your business now comes from online?

A We like to do business with people we can talk to and we have that with Quotit. And, that's how we do business with people. About one third is from the internet, one third yellow pages, and one third referrals.

Q Can you go over how your agency manages visitors that go through your site?

A The number of visitors are not as high as we want, (Bill says he'll get some numbers to us). But, we using the responder (verify this) and again, we follow up, send email quotes and then mail a package and follow up with a call.

Q What do you like to do in your spare time?

A I'm a minister in our local church and like to spend time at Lake Travis in Austin. I walk every day to the mall with some friends and have coffee at Starbucks where I often run into clients and chat. I still go out and make sales in all areas, at my young age of 70.

For more information contact:

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Converting Inquiries Into Orders

By Galen Stilson

Depending upon your order margin, your attempt at conversion may involve anywhere from one to ten or more attempts. How many conversion attempts is right for you? A rule of thumb is: "keep mailing until it's not profitable to do so." If you still show a profit after 10 mailings, keep on' a going.

What would a series of conversion attempts include? Here's a hypothetical example:

- Attempt #1: Your full sales package, including a "thanks for requesting information" note.
- Attempt #2: Carbon copy of original letter with a reminder of any discount cut-off dates. Include a testimonial sheet.
- Attempt #3: New letter giving a premium expiration date. Response device to indicate last chance to get premium.
- Attempt #4: Letter from a top-level executive that uses a different appeal from past efforts.
- Attempt #5: New letter built around a strong testimonial, backed by other testimonials. Offer a new premium or incentive.
- Attempt #6: New letter built around your guarantee and no-risk offer.
- Attempt #7: Last-chance offer that summarizes the entire series. You might want to give a special "final offer" -- a "bribe" -- if you will -- to make the sale.

The mailing time-frame might be one-per-week or every two weeks (depends upon your experience).

After the conversion series is finished, those who did not order should be plugged into a list of non-responders. These prospects should be mailed (full dm package) on an annual or semi-annual basis until you determine that they're no longer legitimate prospects.

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