



The Most Important Business Building Questions

Have you ever heard the statement that the biggest key to business-building and sales success is activity, or more specifically, activity that leads to sales: prospecting, presenting and closing deals. It's simple, the more people you talk to, the more business you'll do. If you talk to enough people during the day, you'll eventually encounter someone who says, "I need what you have", or "I know someone who needs what you have." Below are some questions you can use to direct your days activities.

Here are the important questions that lead to sales success:

What will I do *today* to grow my business?

This is the most important question to ask first thing in the morning. Your answer should revolve around proactive activities to grow your business. Ideally that activity consists of lots of in-person calls at best, and phone calls at the very least. Cold e-mails are one of the worst, if not the worst, forms of *initial* communication unless accompanied by a phone call or in-person visit.

New salespeople need to know, their number one priority in business is to go out and talk to new people about what they do. Everything else comes after that. The second priority is sales calls. It isn't paperwork, cleaning their desk, spell-checking a letter or answering a call from a client to tell them something basic like what address to send their paperwork to. Those tasks are done off-hours and ideally, most of the time, by other people.

One of the primary goals of your activity is to talk to and meet new people. This is one of the challenges with networking groups. You're talking to the same people over and over again whose number-one priority is to sell you something as opposed to the other way around.



There's no problem with going to Chambers of Commerce events or BNI (Business Networking International) groups as an add-on, or for fun because you like the people, but you only go to these *after* you have your 50 cold/semi-warm calls (or whatever your number is to generate the new business necessary) done first. If you haven't hit those numbers, you don't go to the comfortable networking meeting and waste your time. It's the same with social media. That is done after your proactive marketing. Networking groups and social media aren't proactive, they're reactive because you have to rely on other people to contact you or give you leads. You can't control your numbers that way. When you go out and knock on doors and ring phones, you control the numbers. It's not a directive to Not do other networking and social media, just do them after your in-person calls and phone calls.

A variation of the above question is: *"What will I do tomorrow to grow my business?"* You of course ask this question the night before. Come up with one, two, or three ideas and then set some goals around those. For example, 10 in-person cold calls, 30 follow-up phone calls, and 30 follow-up e-mails. You might even add sending out five handwritten notes. Use blue ink!

What am I doing *right now* to grow my business?

Use this question to stay focused on your sales numbers during the day. If it's currently prime time (the time in which you can reach prospects), you should be prospecting, presenting, and closing 80% of the time, or more. It's recommended for you to make two signs in the largest font possible on your computer that say, "Am I prospecting, presenting, or closing right now?" Put one at your work desk and the other in your car if you make in-person calls. If it's 5 a.m. and the answer is 'no', that's fine. If it's 11 a.m. on a Wednesday and your prospects work a typical 9-to-5 day, and your answer is 'no', that's a problem. Granted, some of this time might be travel time but, the focus should be on driving to make a cold call or follow-up call with a prospect. Also, you of course want to use your time wisely by grouping calls together.



What *did* I do today to grow my business?

What are your results at the end of the day? Did you hit the numbers you needed to hit to be successful? How many people did you call on and how many did you actually talk to? Based upon your annual, monthly, weekly goals and daily activity, did you get done what needed to get done? All of this leads to the ultimate question, the answer of which best determines sales success or failure: *How many new people did I make aware of my business today?*

Also remember how important persistence is. 81% of appointments are made after the fourth contact. 80% of salespeople don't make the initial four contacts. The average executive gets 400 e-mails a day and has 52 hours of unfinished work on their desk. It's not that they aren't interested or don't want to hear from you. When they have a to-do list of 76 items and you show up as number 77, it's most likely going to take some time to move up the list. Either way, on the day they do wake up thinking about doing something related to the product or service you sell, you want to be the next thought in their mind.

From an article by John Chapin, Complete Selling Inc.