

Top 10 ways to lose prospects

Losing prospects is not the way to prospect for future sales. Companies are actively—even aggressively—seeking new customers, but they're failing. They're failing to get prospects' attention or running potential customers away.

Here are the top 10 sales mistakes companies frequently make, along with suggestions for turning failure into success: new customers.

1 **Think short-term: Ignore customers who are in the research phase**

Some leads close quickly and others you lead to the close. It may take 4 to 12 months to complete the buy-cycle, which usually begins with the research phase. Take advantage of leads who are "researching" to conduct your own "research." Find out where they are in the research phase, who is involved in the decision-making process, and how they came to KnowledgeStorm or a syndicated site.

Use the information to influence their search and opinion, while positioning yourself to be the provider of choice when they move to the next phase of the buy-cycle.

2 **Be non-discriminating: All leads are created equally**

There are different types of leads and different ways of treating them. The type of lead—A, B, C or F—determines how it should be treated. Leads with the potential to close in 1 month should not be treated the same way as a lead that could close in 6 months. Know the difference and make sure the right lead gets to the right person—in a timely fashion. Don't let your leads become a statistical fatality: over 90% of leads are not acted upon.

3 **Ignore leads: Treat B & C leads like Cinderella**

Yes, immediately respond to A leads, but don't ignore B and C leads. Cultivate them. Befriend prospects with a campaign that educates them. Woo them with information that can solve their problem. Prepare them to become an A lead. When they're ready to move to the next phase of the buy-cycle, they'll immediately think of you.

4 **Don't act: Contact the lead next week or next month**

It sounds simplistic, but in the sales world A is for action—immediate action. Contact leads within 24 hours because leads age and lose their value exponentially as time slips away. Wait a week and an A lead could turn into a B lead. Wait a month, and that lead is no longer a lead—it's dead.

5 **Quit quickly: They don't answer, so you don't call back**

You contact the prospect once, but there's no response so you forget about them. Forget about them and they'll forget about you.

Don't let them forget you. Try e-mail...try phone...try direct mail...try the phone again. Keep communications flowing, even if it's one-sided. KnowledgeStorm customer studies have shown a minimum of four contact attempts is necessary. The more you contact them, the more you increase the chance that they'll respond—and remember you.

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6 **Be rude: Forget business manners 101**

People are more receptive when treated courteously and respectfully. Do your homework before calling a prospect. Know the purpose of the call—request for more information or to acknowledge their visit to the site—and know what you're going to say before the prospect answers the phone.

Since KnowledgeStorm is a pathway to other sites, be sure to reference the source, which is found by clicking the lead. It gives you a starting point for the conversation, and makes it easier for the prospect to remember why they clicked on the site.

7 **Be common: Look like your competition**

When advertising online, you use the same keywords that competitors use and you look like them. High-level keywords like supply chain, CRM, and anti-virus are common—being common doesn't get you noticed. Dare to be uncommon by using key words that generate the most amount of traffic with the least amount of competition.

8 **Speak Greek: Use unfamiliar words**

It's easier for prospects to find you when you speak their language. Find out why existing customers chose your product or service and replay their words in your messaging. Use familiar keywords that address their needs, while simultaneously describing your product or service.

9 **Confuse customers: A murky description gets murky results**

The right keywords and search results led them to your site. But your description and website are murky. They don't know who you are, what you offer, or what you can do for them. They click away.

Don't let them get away. Reel them in with a title and a 2 or 3 word descriptor that clearly communicates what you offer. Structure the solution summary so it answers frequently asked questions. Plus, include a keyword or phrasing that shows your uniqueness among competitors.

10 **Be braggadocios: Claim you're the best...like all the rest**

Of course your solution is the best. But, bragging your award-winning product is superior doesn't convince customers your solution is the best for them. Fluffy copy doesn't get clicks; factual, relevant information does.

Grab prospects with copy that is specific, personal, and active in style. Benefit-oriented copy—it increases efficiency by 50% or customers reduce training costs by 20%—whets their appetite for more information.

Prospecting for leads can definitely yield positive results. With the best keywords, right search results, and proactive follow-up of leads, you'll be succeeding with style: closing leads and winning customers.