

# Business Success Today

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## SALES

### Asking the Right Questions is Key to Boosting Sales

To be successful at selling, you must engage your prospects with relevant questions and understand what underlies their answers. When someone asks you a question, it's almost impossible not to think of the answer. Try it yourself. What kind of car do you drive? Most likely, the answer popped up immediately.

The decision to buy a product or service takes place in a customer's mind. The right questions help focus and shape an individual's thoughts and conclusions.

You might want to add the following types of questions to your sales repertoire.

**Interpersonal Questions.** Everyone likes to talk about themselves. Asking questions about a client helps establish rapport and build credibility. The information allows you to build upon commonalities such as sports, hobbies and other interests.

**Questions about Thoughts, Feelings and Beliefs.** Questions and observations about a person's thought process reveals his or her communication style. Does the prospect prefer a direct approach, an informational approach or an intuitive approach? How price-sensitive or brand-conscious is the prospect? Does the person make spontaneous decisions or take time to consider all options? Knowing this information enables you to engage customers in their preferred manner.

**Questions about Prior Experiences.** Knowing a customer's perception about past experiences will enable you to differentiate yourself from the competition as well as point out relevant benefits and features that will help you close the sale.

Successful salespeople usually listen far more than they talk. They know how to ask questions and what

## INSURANCE

### Coverage to Protect Your Business on the Rainiest of Days

Accidents happen - so savvy small-business owners plan for the unexpected by purchasing business umbrella insurance.

A business umbrella policy provides additional protection above and beyond the basics.

It's different from a standard business liability policy that protects you up to a given amount.

For example, if your current liability policy provides \$1 million of protection but you were successfully sued for more, the umbrella policy would cover the additional amount up to the policy limit.

Business umbrella policies are an excellent way to provide protection against costly lawsuits resulting from a wide variety of potential threats. Those threats can include things such as:

- Driving accidents that result in multiple claims or extensive types of damage
- Professional service errors resulting in inadvertent destruction or corruption of data
- Unknown defects in workmanship or other errors that result in multiple lawsuits or claims
- Other unanticipated events leading to a loss of life, property damage or other injuries

Many factors are involved in deciding on the appropriate level of business umbrella insurance to purchase, including the amount of existing coverage, industry, profitability and personal assets at stake.

Contact your insurance agent to discuss options and obtain a quote for various coverage amounts.

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### How to Survive the Recession ...Stronger Than Before

As bad as it is out there, it's important to recognize that this is a time of tremendous opportunity. Get my free report "How to Survive the Recession... Stronger Than Before" by emailing me at xxxxxx@xxxxx.com or calling 555-555-5555.

# How to Create an Offer That Customers Can't Resist

A good offer is a deal that tilts the scale so that value outweighs cost in a prospect's mind.

In today's economy, people often view price as the most important factor in an offer.

Yet customers are actually more likely to balk when the value of products and services isn't apparent to them. An offer must reflect genuine value to a customer.

How can you help prospects understand the value of your offer?

- Relate the value to the problem they want to solve.
- Express the value in the customer's own words.
- Relate the value to something specific.
- Articulate both the short- and long-term value of the offer.
- Tell your prospects exactly what they're going to get.

- Compare the value of the offer to the opportunity cost of not taking the offer.

## Getting Attention

To get customers to pay attention to your offer, make it instantly recognizable and state it succinctly.

Use strong, simple, bold language and dramatic colors.

Timeliness is critical, so you should carefully consider your launch dates and follow-up during the offer's duration.

A versatile offer that includes a variety of products at different price points will appeal to a range of customers and allow you to obtain maximum revenue. You need to give prospects a convincing reason to act.

The offer should tell your prospects exactly what you want them to do.

## WISDOM

# Quotes by...Jack Welch

"My main job was developing talent. I was a gardener providing water and other nourishment to our top 750 people. Of course, I had to pull out some weeds too."

"Control your own destiny or someone else will."

"An organization's ability to learn, and translate that learning into action rapidly, is the ultimate competitive advantage."

"I've learned that mistakes can often be as good a teacher as success."

"Willingness to change is a strength, even if it means plunging part of the company into total confusion for a while."

"Good business leaders create a vision, articulate the vision, passionately own the vision and relentlessly drive it to completion."

"Face reality as it is, not as it was or as you wish it to be."

"Giving people self-confidence is by far the most important thing that I can do. Because then they will act."

## Worth Reading

Selections from the best articles seen online this month

**Breaking Up...with Customers**  
From *Inc.com*

"Over the course of the eight years we've been in business, we've had to 'break up' with a bunch of customers for various reasons, and you know what I've come to terms with? It's OK. Not every customer is right for every business."  
More: <http://tinyurl.com/lfjwh>

**Welcome to Island Marketing**  
From *Seth Godin's Blog*

"If you run a business on a small island, every interaction matters and every customer is precious."  
More: <http://tinyurl.com/mdmnav>

**What's Your Tribe's Secret Language?**  
From *Remarkable Communication*

"When you're writing to persuade a particular tribe, you've got to find the language that they use every day. Every time you say notepaper when they expect writing paper, you send a signal that you're not one of them."  
More: <http://tinyurl.com/mmg6el>

**Positive Focus**  
From *Perry Marshall*

"You start every interaction, every meeting, and every day with this question: 'What's GOOD?'"  
More: <http://tinyurl.com/kvgtbu>

**Death Spiral!**  
From *Seth Godin's Blog*

"Change is a bear, but it's better than death."  
More: <http://tinyurl.com/nodw6n>

# How to Design a Winning Business Website

A web surfer typically decides within a matter of seconds whether to linger on your website or move on.

To capture the attention of impatient online visitors, your site must be compelling, inviting and attractive. To hold the surfers' interest and ultimately win their business, it must also be functional, easy to navigate and focused on their needs.

Here are some fundamentals of good website design.

## General

- Your website should load quickly and be easy to scan. A common mistake is including too many graphics, pop-ups, banner ads, and flashing or blinking images. These features take time to load and are distracting to viewers.
- Your website should be easy to navigate. Visitors should know at all times where they are on the site as well as where they came from, how to get where they want to go and how to get back to the home page.

- Keep it clean and simple. Web pages should never look cluttered or overdesigned. Good layout employs a balance of graphics, white space and text.

## Content

- The content on your site should focus on providing specific information about your services and products. Graphics and other features should not divert attention from the message.

**“Your website must be functional, easy to navigate and focused on clients' needs.”**

- By refreshing your content regularly you can attract repeat visitors and boost your search engine rankings.
- Be sure that the content and the page headings are grammatically correct. Poor grammar and spelling errors reflect badly on your website and on your business.

## Keywords

- Optimize your site. Use keywords appropriately to help viewers determine whether the site is relevant to them. Keywords are also critical to search engine rankings.
- Hone your home page. The home page is what viewers see first, so it should be attractive and welcoming and have useful information.
- From any page on the site, one should be able to get back to the home page by clicking the company logo or business name.

## E-Commerce

- If you're selling merchandise online, order placement should be simple and straightforward. In addition, customers should know what they can expect after their order is placed, such as how to print a receipt or track shipping.

A well-designed website can distinguish you from competitors and attract visitors you can convert into customers.

## BOOK REVIEW

### Take Their Breath Away, by Bell and Patterson

With good customer service being so rare these days, it's not too hard to stand out by taking care of your customers properly.

As companies such as the online shoe retailer Zappos demonstrate, customer service really does pay because it creates dedicated fans and stimulates enthusiastic referrals.

Take Their Breath Away could be described as a handbook for creating knockout customer service in your own business.

The strengths of this book are the practical examples and clear how-tos. In the first half of the book, which is divided into 12 strategies, Chip Bell and John Patterson provide inspiring demonstrations of other businesses that have implemented customer service ideas.

The second part helps business owners choose and implement these strategies.

There are a lot of ideas here - but if you choose just one or two, you'll reap the rewards.

## Quick Quiz

Each month I'll give you a new question.

Just email me at xxxxx@xxxx.com or call xxx-xxx-xxxx for the answer.

This month's question:  
What is the shortest word that uses all five vowels?

## MARKETING

### How Even Small Businesses Can Create a Powerful Brand

A strong brand is an invaluable asset. But how can a small or medium-sized enterprise or solopreneur create a powerful brand? And how can you consistently deliver on the brand's promise?

Your brand incorporates elements of your name, logo, slogan, offerings and business philosophy.

It identifies your products and services, but even more important, it reflects the personality and integrity of your company.

It tells customers what they can expect from you, and it differentiates you from the competitors.

Your brand is derived largely from who you are, the value you deliver and perceptions people have about how you conduct business.

Effective brands establish a connection between the brand personality and the actual product/service. An effective brand will:

- Make a clear statement
- Affirm your credibility
- Connect with customers on an emotional level
- Motivate buyers
- Cement customer loyalty

It's important that you reinforce your brand at every point of public contact. Your website, business cards, vehicles, signage, letterhead, premises, etc., should all affirm your brand identity.

A strong brand is a powerful competitive advantage. It's important to spend time researching, defining and building your brand. After all, it is a promise to your customers that you and your employees will live out each and every day.

Ultimately, your brand resides in the hearts and minds of customers, prospects and the general public as the sum total of their perceptions and experiences with your company.

### Inside This Month

- How to Choose an IT Service Provider
- Coverage to Protect Your Business on the Rainiest of Days
- How to Create an Offer That Customers Can't Resist
- Top Accounting Software for Small Businesses
- Book Review: Take Their Breath Away
- Worth Reading: The Best Articles This Month

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