

OVER AND OVER AND OVER, FREQUENCY BUILDS TRUST

BY DENNIS SCHRAG

Jeffrey Gitomer, the noted popular press sales guru, authored the *Little Black Book of Connections*. The premise of the book is simple. People prefer doing business with their friends. Clients strongly prefer service providers whom they trust. Trust is the result of building business relationships.

I like Mr. Gitomer's rule of "The More the More: The more people are attracted to you, the more solid connections you make." Solid connections result in trusting relationships.

"It's not who you know, it's who knows you," he yells. And he is correct. Branding means establishing your reputation so that your organization has top of the mind presence with clients.

Guess what? Getting people to know you takes creativity and hard work. And it takes repetition. But it is much faster, easier and much more fulfilling than cold calling and most other sales techniques.

Al Lautenslager, guerrilla marketing coach at Entrepreneur.com, reminds us that it all goes back to Basic Marketing101. It takes a minimum of six times of contacting a prospect before they're ready to trust you. It is a simple premise – connect with your audience over and over and over and over and over. Find some reason to garner their attention, and then leave a positive, valuable impression. But you must do it frequently.

The legendary Jack Welch from General Electric understood this

concept. Mr. Welch was an engineer by training and a manager by default. He knew you had to deliver the message over and over and over and over. He use to say he had to send the same message at least seven times before the senior executives at GE really believed him.

Isn't there a chance that prospects will confuse your persistence with peskiness? The short answer is: perhaps. However if you have a friendly demeanor, a short message and offer some help to make the prospect more successful, you always will be welcomed. That is why help-oriented newsletters (as opposed to bragging newsletters) are so powerful.

Mr. Lautenslager says most marketers stop after just three contacts. Research reported in *The Marketing Handbook for the Design and Construction Professional* provides the following statistics:

- ◆ 43% of business developers make one call and quit
- ◆ 25% make two calls and quit
- ◆ 12% make three calls and quit
- ◆ 80% of all sales are made after the fifth call

Selling is not begging. When you add value to your client's organization, you are a very welcome guest. Be a friend

and a problem solver first. Think of yourself in those terms.

Remember the 80/20 rule when interacting with prospects. The prospect should talk 80 percent of the time. You listen and ask the right probing questions, then verify the information you acquired. With the right information selling is simplified.

Make no presumptions. Don't provide the solution until you discover the prospect's problem.

Do not answer unasked questions. A prospect's statement does not always demand a response. "Your price is too high" is a statement of opinion and does not require a response.

Have a systematic approach to selling. You must be organized, prepared and efficient when meeting with prospects. Control each step of the meeting. Encourage the prospect to provide information. Be professional.

Foremost, build trust by having frequent contact.

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