

Unbiased Financial Information Provided by Financial Wisdom.

Mistake to Avoid

Not Organizing Your Follow-Up of Sales Prospects Effectively

After you have identified a prospective buyer or a prospect has become a lead by initiating a contact, it is critical to stay in touch with that person. Even though every sales person wants to close the sale after the first contact, that rarely happens. In almost all cases, buyers purchase on their schedule, not the sales person's schedule. Having and using an organized follow-up system can significantly improve your sales performance.

Organize your follow up

Every prospect has the potential to become a customer, but some are more likely than others. Prioritizing your leads should be based on the likelihood of a sale and the value of the sale if it takes place. Prioritizing leads will also help you use your time most effectively. Here is a sample priority plan:

[Referrals](#) - Referrals from customers deserve special attention. Your existing customer has placed trust in you by making the referral. You must not jeopardize that trust. In addition, a referral is usually pre-qualified. That is, your customer has already determined the referral may want or need your product.

[Existing customers](#) - Existing customers are probably your best potential source of new business. It may be repeat orders or new orders for new products or services. Staying in touch with them is critical.

[Existing leads](#) - Once you have had an initial contact, don't forget about the lead just because they did not buy yet. Be sure to keep track of your contacts and what was discussed. There are many systems to help do this including several electronic contact manager software programs that will also make scheduling further contacts more convenient.

[New leads](#) - When a prospect first becomes a lead by indicating an interest in a contact, by all means follow up immediately. Something triggered their interest, and without some conversation, it is impossible to tell whether they are ready to buy immediately or whether they are just gathering information.

[Cold prospects](#) - This group should probably be the last group to pursue. Stay aware of changes in the marketplace to identify events that would make them more likely to be interested. If you learn that a competitor is going out of business or raising prices, it is an ideal time to contact these people. Also, if you learn of changes within the prospect's company like a large new order or restructuring, you may find this group more receptive.

Having some organization to your follow-up system will save you time and make time spent following up more effective.