

E-mail Can Send Sales Soaring or Delete Opportunities

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- *E-mail is great as a sales tool.*
- *E-mail isn't great as a sales tool.*
- *The e-mailer determines whether e-mail is or isn't effective.*

E-mail can be a sales person's friend or foe – depending on how it is used. To maximize sales results with e-mail, remember to:

- Say thank you.
- State what you need.
- Develop an e-follow-up system.

When I worked outside sales for a drug company, we salespeople always fought for prospect attention. To differentiate myself from competitors I went back to a sales basic – say thank you. After each sales call, I pulled out my stationery for a quick thank-you note. I mailed it the same day.

Today, use e-mail and your stationery to say thanks. Many of you have a Blackberry; use it to your advantage.

Jim Golds at File Vault says, "I recently closed an account with a 'triple-barrel post-call thank you.'" Sent the e-mail and mailed the card before leaving the building so the client had a touch within minutes and another in the mail the next day. When I phoned the day after that to set a meeting to review my proposal, it was the third touch within three days."

One of my bank clients is a power e-mail user, averaging more than 250 daily messages. Each e-mail competes for consideration. If you want her attention, the e-mail must have a clear title. Subject lines that contain "re:re:fwd," say "Old news here." Blank subject lines seem evasive and unhelpful.

Make e-mail subject lines to-the-point. For example, "Thank You – Proposal Attached," or, "Confirmed Meeting 4/18."

To improve your communication more, say what you need in the first sentence of the e-mail. Example: "The revised price schedule we discussed Thursday is attached and I can provide the 15 percent sales rate on orders before April 20."

An attorney client of mine mastered these first two steps of e-mail as a sales tool. Follow-up was the next hurdle. He sent e-mails and tried to remember if he ever heard back from the prospect.

Our minds are not effective to-do lists. So we devised an automated tracking system for outstanding e-mailed items. Outlook users can write custom rules. We wrote a rule called "Waiting For." Each time he sends a prospect e-mail that needs a response, he "cc's" himself and a copy of the message automatically hits his "Waiting For" folder. (Want the "Waiting For" instructions? E-mail me.)

Once a week he checks this "Waiting For" folder for outstanding items. Why does he set aside one time a week? Well, I'm out of column space this week and I'll discuss that in my next column.