

How to carry your prospection activities post-COVID?

Every company knows it: prospecting new customers, B2B isn’t an easy task. The fact is that this activity is time-consuming and is not always a success story!

However, the companies have at their disposal many new tools and applications to organize their prospection. The basis is to have good sales CRM software. From there, you can organize emailing or SMS campaigns. You push your business introduction to companies that you have qualified as active on your market. You would then monitor whether your prospect has opened your message, whether he has replied and expressed some interest. Fine! First of all, you need to learn how to use these new IT tools! Secondly, you need to personalize your message and not only add the first name of your contact!

Also, many companies are more or less open to welcome the messages of newcomers in their field. If they have enough suppliers or not in a position to buy, they would avoid sharing the buyer's contact name! They might also redirect you to their internet contact page, thus inviting you discovering not only their web contact page but also their activity.

The phone call prospection is regard ed today, more than before, as a « not wanted » contact procedure. But, buyers are receiving many emails, how to stand from the crowd? Whatsapp can be a friendly alternative to emails as you come directly in the hand of the buyer. Ok! but your message must say something interesting!

Prospecting outside your domestic market is even more difficult. The cultural aspect of business relationships and communication in a different language are challenges to overcome!

Until now, the proximity to a market or your prospects was a critical success factor. But one should inspire from the Chinese salespeople contacting us every day on the social networks: we are all neighbors on social networks!

The COVID crisis has shown us that we can meet differently by using video conference tools on computers and smartphones. But, it has also shown us not to see the entire face of your counterpart when talking, because of the use of a protective mask, is an obstacle to perceiving well what the people are feeling and expressing!

If you want to sell something in Italy, a tasty lunch or a good dinner will help you to succeed.

I believe that prospecting is, first of all, to be able to target prospects that you want to convert into customers and that « less is better.» We should prospect like a craftsman and offer the needed time to review all the information that the company targetted is sharing on their website and social media. Studying the administrative and financial information available on the prospect will tell you more about the activity, the founders, and the company's financial health.

And then you can compare: what you can offer that the prospect is needing and what you can provide that the prospect does not have yet and may need. You write your message around that specific product and that particular service that will trigger your prospects' interest.

It will save you a lot of time in the first approach and will help to start the conversation with the company earlier with better results. It would help if you also welcomed the fact that a company does not want to be targetted and therefore bothered.

If the prospect is reacting to your first message, you can start the conversation and identify the next steps to business opportunities!

A collective approach to the prospection might bring good value to the process. This approach consists of sharing the customer review with your team, preparing the presentation to submit to the prospect, and co-writing a prospection strategy. Why do we need a prospection strategy? Often, you need to finalize some steps before initiating the first contact. For example, buy samples and review the current level of product quality at the prospect. One can set up a team strategy to convert the prospect into a customer: play prospection in a team!

Prospection is not always a matter of dedicating a full-time job on it. In the beginning, it can be done flexibly, provided this resource conducts the prospection with regularity with your team. The prospection can be outsourced, with the advantage of the outsider view! An outsider view will better identify the gaps and the opportunities in your offer and challenge your teams accordingly. You can start with a market study to make sure that your proposal will match the targetted market & prospects. I believe that the analysis of your offer versus the aimed market should come ideally before your prospection activities and that a TaylorMade, personal and collective approach to prospection can be the critical success factor to win prospects into customers for a long time!

If conducted that way, the prospection for market entry and market penetration is an exciting challenge to take up!

Written by Mrs. Nadine Gesbert, International Business Director, Heronviews SAS France. N.gesbert@heronviews.com +33 06 02 08 35 45