

Writing Your Sales Plan

Do you know how many units/services you must sell in order to meet your financial obligations? If not, don't go any further until you have this information available? Be accurate and specific. Know your limits and your potential!

Targeting Niche Markets

Here are some ways to target special niche markets:

- Advertising that is well-placed and targeted
- Clip trade journal articles for customers
- Create educational opportunities
- Develop products or services tailored to specific markets
- Direct mail
- Industry associations
- Press releases
- Marketing material developed to aid a targeted industry
- Network meetings and events
- Position your product or service to meet their special needs
- Publish a book or booklet of helpful information
- Solve a problem
- Speak at industry events
- Sponsorship of industry events and awards
- Survey prospective clients
- Target an industry
- Testimonial letters
- Trade newsletters, magazines, and journals
- Write articles for industry publications

Look for an unmet need in your world, treat it as though it were an opportunity, subject it to intense scrutiny, then set out to identify with your potential market. Anticipate your growth in the light of their self-interest.

Set Goals

Determine exactly how much business you need in order to generate and achieve your personal and business objectives. Make sure your goals are both challenging and attainable. But also be sure they are doable and challenge you to a higher level of

productivity. The flip side is impossible goals. These will only cause much frustration and underachievement.

Analyze & Prioritize

Three variables will determine your ability to meet your goals:

1. Products
2. Prospects
3. Time Management

You must critically assess each of these factors to determine just where to put your energy and focus.

Choose the products that are easier to sell and have shorter sales cycles. Quantify how many of each product you need to sell and how much revenue you will realize from those sales. Carefully assess the risk of spending too much energy on “the big sale.” You might be better off making lots of small sales instead of focusing on just a few high-risk opportunities.

Take a close look at your prospects and where you are in the “pipeline” with each. Determine who your best prospects are and calculate how much business you can do with them. Put wishful thinking and the imaginary forecast aside.

Take a close look at your efforts and time management. Your time is your most critical resource. Evaluate how efficiently you’ve used your time in the recent past, and determine how you can be more efficient now.

Strategy Review & Adjustment

The tendency is to now start making sales calls. But hold off just a bit. Wise businesspeople take a few moments (or hours) to reflect on three key strategies before shifting into “execute mode.”

First, review your selling strategy to ensure that it is really as efficient as possible. Second, look at your product strategy, paying particular attention to the effectiveness of

your sales messages and benefits statements. Third, evaluate the effectiveness of your prospecting techniques.

Before executing your plan, identify the critical resources (people, materials, money, etc.) you need in order to succeed. Make sure these resources are in place – and be sure to have a backup plan if they aren't.

Plan Execution & Management

Managing your plan means that you must track results so you can analyze what is working and what is not. The time you invest in this process will help you focus your limited resources where you will get the maximum return.