



ODA / TOPLINE

"Building Sales Capacity"

Note From Joel

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Last month we talked about using research to improve the relationships you have with your clients. Let's talk more about sales research.

First, let's divide the research into two kinds:

- General market research
- Targeted specific information gathering about a particular prospect or customer

Both have their place and have their value in selling.

General market research is a very wide topic. You can learn about the market you serve by talking to customers, suppliers and industry personnel. Most industries have trade publications which can help you keep up on market trends and general opportunities. Your suppliers have access to general industry data and trends. Examples include:

- Safety, health and environment
- Fire protection
- Building codes
- Lean manufacturing and Total Quality Programs
- Tariff and import export regulations

Any of these may be an opportunity to stay on top of your market and help your customers to do so.

One hint here, when making sales calls look for magazines, trade publications, governmental manuals and notices, and management binders. They may tip you off that your customer has needs in these areas where you can help.

Targeted information about a customer builds on the market research topic.

A few general tips here:

1. Ask open ended questions
2. Listen to the answers and ask follow ups.
3. Record the information
4. Collect written info about your customer wherever you can
5. Start with their business card
6. Do this in a conversational way, share information

7. Steer it toward a sales discussion when the time is right

I have learned the most from a customer when I started out by sharing something with him. This is called an "even exchange." If the customer sees that you have done your homework, the door opens a little wider.

***Good Selling,
Joel McFadden***



Joel McFadden

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Let's Build our Sales Capacity!

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