



## **Prospecting: Sales 2.0 – This Is Not Your Mother’s Lead Generation**

Prospecting isn’t what it used to be. Social networking tools are beginning to play a big part in raising the bar for effective lead generation. Tools such as blogs, LinkedIn, YouTube, genius.com, and InsideView can all be great assets for improving prospecting results. Business development skills are changing. Professional salespeople need to be experts in marketing, technology, relationship building and selling skills. All four areas must be integrated to truly practice the ‘law of attraction and closing.’

### **Marketing:**

The same principles of good sales applies to marketing. People connect and buy on emotion. Terri Langhans, president of BlahBlahBlah, (great company name, huh?) says it best, “You must connect before you convince.” Your blog, LinkedIn profile, email messages and phone conversations must demonstrate that you understand and know your prospect’s world. For example, let’s look at the description of Sales 2.0 captured from an unnamed website:

“Sales 2.0 brings together customer-focused methodologies and productivity-enhancing technologies that transform selling from an art to a science.”

What the heck does this high level jargon mean? This definition sounds very smart; however, it tells me that the people writing the web copy really don’t have a good idea of the profile looking at Sales 2.0. Here is a translation of that same definition in layman’s language:

“Sales 2.0 tools are the new way to prospect. They save time and produce better results by telling you who to call on, what to say, and when to call. Stop trying to sell ice cream to Eskimos in the winter.”

Another basic marketing principle that must be defined is your ideal client. Without this clear picture, you cannot write marketing or sales copy that captures a prospect’s interest. Curves, one of the fastest growing franchises in the United States, is very clear on their target. Women in their early 30’s and 40’s, working moms with kids, women with limited time to work out, and women who aren’t thrilled about spandex in the company of men. All of their Curves marketing and sales copy is written to attract this profile.

### **Technology and Relationships:**

Be careful you don’t become a trend junkie or lose sight of the strategy behind Sales 2.0 tools. Many salespeople are signed up on so many programs they spend their entire day checking out sites versus making contacts. They confuse being busy with actually getting results. (Yes, I am talking to all of the BlackBerry users who can’t pay attention during a one hour meeting.)

LinkedIn is one of the top social networking tools being used today. You set up your profile, start inviting people to your network, and sign up for user groups. Here’s where relationships and technology meet: David emails you to ask for an introduction to one of your connections, Beth. If you don’t know David really well, are you going to hand over one of your best relationships to him? David needs to build a true

relationship with you first; a phone call, cup of coffee or a gesture of giving you something of value before asking for a favor. Technology plus relationships closes business.

**Selling Skills:**

There are proven principles of influence and sales that will always be incorporated into your prospecting plan, regardless of technology. When you find a connection or get introduced by a connection, you still need to be armed with great telephone rapport skills and a compelling value proposition that immediately tells the prospect you know his/her business, challenges and possible solution.

There is a joke in the sales training business: "What's the difference between a cold call and an introduction? Answer: The first 15 seconds."

An introduction absolutely makes the connection easier and provides more credibility on the front end; but think about it...how many of you have had a referral ask, "Tell me about your company?" If the salesperson can't redirect that conversation with a strong value proposition, they end up boring the prospect by speaking in 'do' language; "We do this, we do that." This strong introduction might end up with a 'let me look at your website and call you back' statement.

Sales 2.0 is still in its infancy and rapidly growing. It is here to stay so start becoming educated on the various tools. Determine which tools deliver the highest return for your organization and incorporate relationships and selling skills. The combination of high tech and personal touch will win the deal.

Good Selling!

Colleen Stanley  
Chief Selling Officer