

Radio Sales Congratulations

Congratulations, you got the job! Now all you have to do is go out, call on businesses, ask them if they want to advertise on the radio, and start racking up commission checks. Wrong! It never works that way. First of all, nobody ever wants to buy any advertising. The few that do consider it a necessary evil and they only want to spend as little as possible.

In reality, it's not advertising we are selling, it's the result of the advertising. We help business owners sell their stuff. A properly designed and well executed advertising campaign brings more customers in the door. That results in more sales. More sales equals more profits. And that's what business owners care about. They don't care about advertising – they care about their bottom line. And if you can help them increase their bottom line, they'll buy lots of advertising from you. But never look at it as selling advertising. Look at it as helping the business owner achieve his or her goals. That's why we don't call our sales people "sales reps". We call our folks "Business Development Specialists", because that's really what we do. We specialize in helping people develop more business.

I was once told that "we're in business to help people solve their problems." Businesses can have many problems, but there are few problems that can't be solved with increased sales. And the only way to increase sales is to invite more people to do business with you. There's that phrase again – "advertising is nothing more than inviting people to do business with you." Truer words were never spoken. Would you consider throwing a big party at your house with lots of food and drinks, yet not send out any invitations? How many people do you think would show up? Yet every single day business owners do just that. They open their doors in the morning, but they fail to invite people in. Of course, depending on the location of the business, some people are going to drift in, just as a few neighbors may see the catering truck and the balloons at your house and wander over to see what all the commotion is about. But, if you want big attendance at your party, invitations are a necessity, just as inviting people into a business every single day is a necessity.

Now, going back to the part about helping business owners solve their problems - how do you do that? You can't just walk in and say "I'm here to help you solve your problems." You are, after all, from the radio station and you're there just to peddle some spots and take their money. At least that's what many of them think. And in many

cases, that's true. That's how many radio stations operate. But that's the wrong way. And if you go down that path, you'll end up disappointed, frustrated, and not making much money.

So how do you do it the right way? I'm glad you asked, because we'll teach you how to do it the right way. It's important that you listen carefully and follow the procedure exactly as we have it laid out. If you do, it will work and you'll make lots of money. However, if you attempt to take short-cuts or to re-invent the system, you'll compromise its effectiveness and you won't get the desired results. Becoming a sales superstar won't be easy. It will require lots of reading and study and lots of practice. However, in the end, the time spent will be well worth the effort.

Step one is to get an appointment with the client. I'm talking about a real sit down face-to-face meeting with the client, not talking to them across the counter while customers wander in and out. You need their mostly undivided attention, even if that means seeing them early in the morning, after closing, or on the weekend. There's an old saying in radio sales – “If they won't give you their time, they certainly won't give you their money.” You have to sell them on the value of the appointment. Convince them you can help them make money. You don't call up and say “I wanna come talk to you about your advertising”, because that won't work. They're also more likely to give you an appointment if they already know you. So make it a point to get to know them, whether it be through the chamber, the Rotary Club, your church, or even going into their business, introducing yourself and buying something. Once you've made that initial contact, you might approach them with “I was in your store the other day and I had a great idea that might help you.” Or, “I saw some great information on increasing sales at furniture stores and wanted to chat with you about how we might help you do that.” There are a myriad number of ways to approach them, but any approach you use should come down to helping them. Saying you want to come talk to them about advertising or about the radio station is a total waste of time. They don't want to buy any advertising and they don't care about the radio station. What they care about is themselves and their store. You can either pitch them the appointment on the phone, or better yet face-to-face, but you have to sell them on the appointment before you'll ever sell them any advertising.

Of course, you may encounter an objection or two just trying to get an appointment. We'll cover that in a future lesson.