

Welcome to the only newsletter that helps you get more profitable laundry/kitchen chemical sales. [Getting Your Share](#) is a regular monthly publication sent to you free from the people at *INTEGRA*.



CREATE FUTURE VALUE **WHEN PROSPECTS STOP LISTENING**

Does this scenario sound familiar?

You're out making cold calls; there's a hotel you've always wanted to call on and you stop in to make an initial sales call. You present your card and explain that you represent the INTEGRA line of laundry supplies, and you'd like to talk with the hotel manager.

The manager is in, and as it happens, he's having problems with his current supplier - trouble getting supplies on time, and his quality is not where he wants it to be.

Great! You visit the laundry with the manager, and as you suspected, there are signs that service of your competitor's equipment has been neglected, and yes, results are poor. Machine cycles are confusing. Employees aren't really sure of what cycles to use, and how to separate soils and linens.

In addition, there are no spotting materials, and employees have assembled a variety of home-use items for this purpose. They are also using bleach as a panacea for getting things clean. In their words, "these products don't work, that's why we have to use so much bleach."

By now, you're convinced that there is a good opportunity here for a new account. You ask the manager for a little more of his time to answer some questions - he agrees. You go back to his office, and converse for about a half-hour.

You leave the manager's office with the promise of presenting him with a proposal for your products. This was a good call, and your "gut" tells you that this one is going to be a sale.

You return a week later with a well-written proposal laying out all the things you can do for the manager and his hotel. He goes through the proposal, and asks all the right questions. You answer all his questions, and when you're through, you ask him for his business.

He replies that he would give you the business right now, but he must first confer with the owner - but that should be "no problem." This sounds reasonable, so you make an appointment to return three days later for a meeting.

Well and good.

When you return, the manager informs you that he hasn't had a chance to talk with the owner yet, but if you could come back the following week he surely would have gotten together with him by then.

You come back a week later, and you're told the manager is in a meeting, and can't be disturbed. You make an attempt to see him again two days later, but same thing - not available. These put off's continue until you're automatically turned away at the front desk every time you call.

What happened, and what can you do to salvage this once exciting opportunity (you did some checking - the same competitor is still in the laundry, and the situation hasn't changed).

WHAT HAPPENED?

How did an exciting prospect turn into someone who won't even talk to you? This is probably the most frustrating thing that can happen to a street salesman. You've done everything right, and the deal just dies on you.

There are two types of reasons for this: legitimate ones, and others.

Legitimate Reasons:

1. The manager has run into a snag (probably with his boss), and he's putting you off because he doesn't want to admit he can't influence his boss.
2. He's genuinely busy, and hasn't gone through the necessary steps to clear things so you can take over the business. Since he has nothing new to tell you, he's avoiding you. (This is particularly dangerous, as the competitor might get wind of what's going on, and clean up his act.)
3. Different things have taken over his "radar screen." He might have labor problems, a shortage of managers, a lack of business, building repairs, etc. Whatever it is, it is more important to him than the discomfort coming from the laundry.
4. He might be getting promoted, transferred, or fired. In any of these cases, you're in trouble - you're NOT a priority.

In any of these cases, there is a legitimate reason (or reasons) why the manager is avoiding you. But, there are illegitimate reasons too:

Illegitimate Reasons:

1. Your proposal is being used to pressure the current provider - the manager has now got some ammo in his hands that will allow him to intimidate his current sales rep (or even better, the current rep's boss) into straightening things out in the laundry.

This happens more than you think. Many times, customers have agreements with vendors that they must honor. The customer is understandably frustrated, so he sees in you an opportunity. This opportunity is that you will generate material for the manager to use as leverage against his current supplier to get him - the supplier - to perform.

2. Sheer laziness. Inertia is the property of a body or thing to remain stationary unless energy is applied to the situation. People are almost always in a state of inertia (or a comfort zone if you prefer).

A universal law of human behavior is that given the never-ending array of choices before us, it is always easier (and often safer) to do nothing. An extension of this law is that since we always have an array of choices before us, we attend to those most easily accessible, and ignore the rest.

3. Change is always scary, and the bigger the change is, the scarier it becomes. I'll grant you that changing suppliers for your laundry products is not a major risk, but there is always the fear that one might go from bad to worse.

Said another way, the manager has been putting up with his current supplier for quite a while now, and while its been a slight annoyance, things keep on going. Given this, it's just easier (and less scary) to let inertia rule and leave things as they are.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Here's the good news. With the possible exception of being used as leverage against a competitor, all cases of foot dragging by a prospect that should, and probably would buy your products, can be addressed by one or all of the following actions:¹

1. Just keep trying. Remember that the prospect expects you to carry the "keep in touch" water. Many times, making a sale in our industry takes as many as 10 - 12 calls, or even more. I believe this is the most important way to overcome prospect inertia, and I also believe that there is a little in all of us that enjoys being pursued.

In other words, all things being equal, I'd rather deal with someone willing to work hard enough to get my business than someone who isn't. Prospects respect persistence if it is well intentioned and not simply an annoyance. In this regard, let's go to the next strategy...

2. Make every attempt at re-establishing contact valuable to the prospect. Always have something new to say when you call. Information is valuable, and people always appreciate it. Try leaving a brochure with a sample when you call, or clip an article from a trade journal that your prospect might appreciate.

This way you're always bringing something of value to your prospect. This will get you lots more attention than the usual "Hi Joe, just getting back as I promised. If you need further information, give me a call."

3. Write them a letter. If you're just getting nowhere, write your prospect a letter. This is something hardly anybody does, which is why it almost always works.

Simply say that you are wondering where you went wrong, because you sincerely believe you can be of help with his problems. Keep it to a single paragraph.

¹ I want to thank my friend Jill Konrath for helping me compile this list of actions. You can and should sign up for her newsletter about selling to big companies by going to her website at: <http://www.sellingtobigcompanies.com/>

Don't worry if you're not a good writer, sincerity is far more important than style. Just be honest and ask what happened. You'll be surprised with the reaction this gets. Your letter will get attention because nobody writes them anymore.

Just be sure that you type the letter, and hand address the envelope. If your letter looks like junk mail, it will be tossed. If it looks like a real hand addressed letter with real stamps, it will be opened - I can almost guarantee this.

And here's another guarantee: Since it is so unusual to get an actual hand addressed letter from a sales rep, I can guarantee you that 90% of the time you'll get a second chance at the manager, and either get the ball rolling again, or get an explanation why.

4. Always plan your next shot. The great American pocket billiards player William Joseph Mosconi still holds the record of running 526 consecutive balls (incredible when you think about it). Good as he was though, Mosconi claimed he wasn't a particularly good pool shooter. His secret was that he always left himself an easy shot.

In the same way, when you're making a sales call, always be planning, and setting yourself up, for your next call. Always part company with your prospect with a plan to return with more valuable information on the next call.

The end game in selling is closing the business - getting the sale. If you view selling as a series of events cemented together by reasons to continue, the close will come naturally.

I hope this information helps you close more sales, and cure prospect "foot dragging."

John White

First gets the business, second gets the leftovers, third gets thrown out - which one are you?

I hope you enjoyed this issue of *Getting Your Share*. Be sure to sign up for the full version to get additional tips and insights – it's free and delivered only via e-mail. If you have any comments or suggestions for this newsletter please e-mail me at JW2437@excite.com. To sign up for the full version of *Getting Your Share* call Leif Anderson at 1-800-366-2477, and say "sign me up." You can also visit *INTEGRA's* website WWW.theintegraprogram.com to sign up, and find more exciting tips and information while you're there.

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