

Success Tip 5: How effective proposals and sales collateral help you stay ahead of the competition.

WHEN INEFFECTIVE COLLATERAL COSTS YOU BUSINESS

Organizations of all sizes are challenged by how they look and feel to their current and potential customers. Often, customers make their buying decisions on the quality of your proposals, sales collateral, and website content. You may have the best product or service in the world, but a failure to communicate and demonstrate your value proposition may put you in second place behind a competitor with better presentation materials and a stronger message.

A few common communication problems include:

- ◆ Poorly written and badly framed proposals
- ◆ Ineffective sales and marketing collateral
- ◆ Deficient value proposition presentations
- ◆ Non supportive website content

It is sometimes difficult for organizations to recognize the communication obstacles that are preventing them from capitalizing on sales opportunities. Day to day business goals and activities generally encourage a “reactive” rather than “proactive” collateral style, which doesn’t always produce the most impressive results. Executives who become engulfed in business details sometimes struggle to recognize weaknesses in collateral or are too overwhelmed with their jobs to focus on addressing the problem.

According to recent customer surveys, vendors with effective sales proposals, collateral, and websites are most often selected over seemingly better qualified suppliers. This means that demonstrating a comprehensive value proposition, from your website to your collateral and in your proposals, is critical to growth.

To complicate matters further, organizations often grow so fast they quickly become fragmented in their value proposition and competitive positioning. Important communication tools are created on the fly, by people who do not necessarily understand how to design and write effective collateral and who often don’t even know what they need to tell the customer to help the organization and its products stand out. When this happens, the collateral that is generated is often sloppy, disjointed, and not representative of the quality of the organization’s products and/or services. Without an effective communication strategy, organizations start to lose in the marketplace to less worthy competitors.

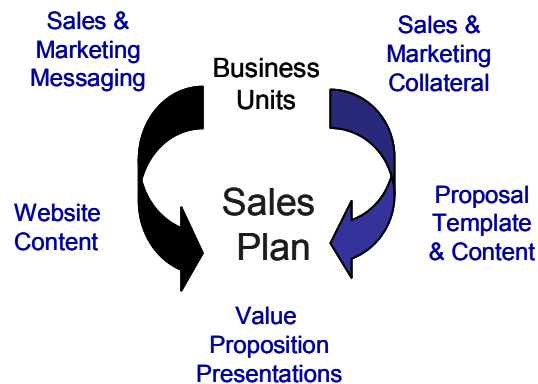
THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX WITH BETTER SALES PROCESS APPROACHES

A simple but effective way to inject out-of-the-box thinking into a growing organization is to engage with an outside Consultant to refresh old and ineffective sales proposals, collateral, value propositions, and Web content. The developing business will benefit many times over from a fresh set of eyes and ears, as well as Consultant-level expertise in an area where internal knowledge may be lacking or unavailable. This independent review of existing sales processes and collateral will help the organization identify areas for improvement and put a plan in place to fill any identified gaps or weaknesses.

COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES NEED TO WORK IN HARMONY

As a business grows and changes, executive management needs to periodically review, edit, and revise the communication strategy. A collateral GAP analysis should be performed to identify areas where existing collateral needs to be strengthened and where collateral should be developed from scratch. All forms of sales collateral should work together in support of the organization's sales and business plans. In addition, the sales effort needs to be a cohesive part of the organization, respected and supported by all business units and all levels of the organization, from the CEO to the mail room. Well designed sales collateral that is developed with input from all affected business units can accomplish a lot toward making this a reality.

The following illustrates how communication components should work together:



START TO TACKLE THOSE COLLATERAL GAPS TODAY

Getting started is easy. All you need to do is contact Sales and Marketing Pros to learn how our trained staff of professionals can work for you to maximize revenues. SMP offers a complimentary 1-hour due diligence session for our new customers. In this session we will work with you to develop an understanding of your specific business needs. The goal of this session will be to frame a customized Statement of Work that will address your short and long-term sales and marketing goals.

Act now to schedule this initial appointment by contacting SMP:

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