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The Path to More Sales

Are you not getting as many sales as you used to? Sales are necessary to have a business. If you aren't selling anything, you are not making any revenue. Without revenue, you can't pay your costs. You need sales!

But what if your sales are flat? That is slightly better than declining sales but still not a healthy business. Unlike leads, problems with your sales are likely an internal issue but there are still some ways that digital marketing can help you make more sales. This guide will explore a number of ways to get you on the path to more sales.

Customer Relationship Management (CRM) System

If you aren't tracking your leads, it is very difficult to figure out if changes in your leads are causing changes in your sales. You could track leads on a piece of paper or a spreadsheet, but a database system provides many more advantages. A database allows different data points to be related and to show many different reports from the data. A Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system will help you record your leads.

A CRM can record all the possible clients your business has interacted with and record a list of that activity. It can store contact information and employee names. A CRM can be used in your sales process to see

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where a prospective client stopped engaging with your sales process. It can also track what lead source brought that brought a prospective client to your company. The wealth of data that can be stored in a CRM will help you understand your leads.

Line of Business System

A line of business system can record data about a number of business operations. But to focus on getting more sales, it can at least store the record of all your sales. Similar to leads, you could store sales data on a piece of paper or a spreadsheet, but a database system can also provide many more advantages. The first advantage is not to have just a summary of your revenue. You can track each individual sale along with related data like customer information, exact product or service sold and other related data. Much like a CRM, a line of business system can show how all the different data points are related and show different reports of your sales data.

You will see more benefits if you can link your CRM and line of business system together. You can then see the process of a lead becoming a sale and all the details of the sale. Sales can be grouped by the lead source, for example. Patterns in leads and sales can be discovered.

Analytics

Those patterns are where analytics can be applied. Analytics, per Wikipedia, is the discovery, interpretation and communication of meaningful patterns in data and the process of applying those patterns towards effective decision making. The key part of this definition is data. Analytics is working with data. With a CRM and line of business system, you will have that data. This data is necessary on the path to more sales.

Data for a small business could be many things. In the context of digital marketing, leads and sales are the primary concern. You need this data to look for patterns and make decisions about your small business. The analytic process involves setting up processes and systems to record different data to be discovered, interpreted and communicated. Discovery is started by recording the data. Interpretation means looking at the data to see patterns. Communication is sharing these patterns with different stakeholders. The final piece is applying those patterns to make decisions. This is the real power of analytics. Data by itself doesn't do anything. But, by converting that data into information, you can see pattern and make changes. By performing analytics, you can look for patterns that can be improved for more sales.

Conversion Rate

A conversion rate could be used to measure a number of things. A conversion is defined by a change in something to something else. Two typical conversion rates to measure in a small business are leads and sales. For leads, a conversion rate could be the number of impressions of ads or views of your business profile on a review website that take an action like clicking the link to your website or calling your business phone number. For sales, a conversion rate is typically when a lead converts to a sale.

Once you have created the methods to track your desired outcomes on both sides, you can calculate the conversion rate. A CRM or line of business system allows you to record all the data and then perform conversion rates for different aspects. One of these aspects could be time, whether that be yesterday, last week, last month or even last year. By looking at conversion rates over time and comparing to other time periods, patterns start to be seen. Once you have your conversion rates calculated, you can look for place to make improvements. You can compare them to different time spans, different sources and different results. One caution is since there are so many options, you might get lost in the analysis and forget the purpose. The key purpose is to find ways to improve your conversion rate. A better conversion rate will help you on the path to more sales.

Sales Process

The sales process is the steps your team take to make a sale. This process might have ways to be improved or find inefficiencies. The first step in this evaluation is to actually identify the steps in your sales process. Unfortunately, your sales process might not be understood by the people performing it. It may have started out as something simple and straightforward and grew over time. Or, everyone involved might not understand the whole process as they just have a small part. Whatever the reason, it is critical to completely understand your sales process and document it. Without this understanding, there is no way to look for ways to improve it. You could be bringing in many leads, but they just aren't converted because your sales process is disorganized.

Fortunately, your sales process can be identified and documented. Once you have this documentation available, you will probably see patterns that can be improved. This documentation can be cross-referenced with your CRM and line of business system to see efficiencies and better data recording possibilities. All of these will add up and help on the path to more sales.

Train Sales Team

The documentation of your sales process will help with training your sales team. Training can't be missing. If everyone involved in your sale

process is selling in a different way, there will be issues. Training will provide the entire team the same understanding of your sale process.

There are many forms of training and people learn in different ways. Regardless of this, it is important that the sale process documentation be available in electronic form for all involved. A paper printout is nice and can be provided but is easily misplaced or forgot about. An electronic version can be updated easily. It is also great for people who learn best by reading. But, a share experience of group training can be beneficial to everyone. Everyone hears the same thing by the same person. There is an opportunity for questions and answers. Other forms of interactivity like role-playing and visual presentation aids can be used. Training is necessary on the path to more sales.

Sell on your Website

There are also external options to make more sales. The best option is to sell your product or service directly on your website. This will allow a sale to occur without getting a lead or going through your sales process. This is not possible with all products or services but if you can, this is a great way to get more sales.

The easiest way is to setup an ecommerce solution on top of your website or as a linked system like a website of

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<http://shop.companyname.com>. The ecommerce solution can have a catalog to list your services or products all with descriptions and prices. The ecommerce solution can be integrated to include shipping calculation and to handle payment processing. You can provide options that if they have questions or concerns, the potential customer can reach out to your sales team. But, the option of a direct ecommerce solution is a great way on the path to more sales.

Sell on Other Platforms

There is another external option to make more sales. You can sell on other platforms. Much like the ecommerce solution, other platforms offer the option of direct sales. Here are just a few platforms that might work for your business:

- Amazon – you can sell products on Amazon’s website and fulfil the sell by shipping the product yourself or shipping the products directly to Amazon’s warehouses.
- eBay – you can create an eBay store and sell your products.
- Review websites – Websites like Angie’s List and Yelp have the option of selling via a deal or offer. A customer purchases your service from the third-party website and then you complete the service.

Third party platforms offer another direct way to make a sale.

Summary

This guide to making more sales has shown a number of ways to make more sales. Most are internal and a few are external. But the internal ways are interconnected and help each other. The ways are:

- Internal
 - Customer relationship management system
 - Line of business system
 - Analytics
 - Conversion rate
 - Sales process
 - Training
- External
 - Sell on website
 - Sell on other platforms

A few of these ways can help make more sells by themselves. Most work in tandem to create a better sales strategy and tactics. They all help on the path to more sales.



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