

LEADERSHIP BRIEFS

Trends and best practices that help s-business managers manage better.



SALES AND MARKETING

Being “First in Mind”

By Lisa Cramer

Because the Internet has forever changed buying behaviors, companies must enhance their sales and marketing processes in order to be “first in mind” with customers and prospects. Being first in mind means engaging prospects before the actual selling process begins, when they are just looking you over. Perhaps they’ll need what you offer later, as they grow their business. If so, it is important that you remain first in mind until they are ready to buy.

You must endeavor to be first in mind with your customers as well. Do not assume that if you don’t hear from customers, no news is good news. It’s not. It’s certainly cheaper to sell into an existing customer base than to find new customers. You must continue to engage customers over time.

Being first in mind with leads, prospects, and customers means maximizing your sales and marketing resources and your revenue. To do this, stay visible to prospects:



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- Monitor what is happening in their business that might initiate a search for your products and services.
- Send e-mails with interesting case studies on how similar companies saved time and money with your offerings.

Technologies and expertise can help you target interested parties so that your sales team will be better prepared to engage prospects and customers.

Being first in mind is an ongoing process. If you continually interact throughout the buy cycle, you will improve results. Minimize lead loss by nurturing leads through the process in order to ensure that more prospects ultimately make the decision to buy

from you.

There are two aspects to minimizing lead loss and maximizing your ability to remain first in mind with prospects—tracking and identifying leads and opportunities, and outbound interaction with prospects. Once leads are generated, it is critical to prioritize them so that hot leads immediately go to sales and others are scored for appropriate actions.

If nurtured properly, when the prospect is ready to buy, your company is most likely to be first in mind. With customers, it takes not only great customer service, but efforts to help them learn how other companies have achieved successes using your prod-

ucts and services. You should have visibility into each customer and understand what they like and don't like about your specific products. When is the customer's contract up for renewal? Do you have an extranet that's easy for your customers to access? Do you track their activities on your Web site and immediately store the information in their customer record?

Being first in mind is not about having the best automation or technology. Although technology can help, it's not the end goal. Being first in mind is about results. It's the combination of marketing, sales, technology, and processes—working together—that will drive the desired results.

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