

# LIBEY ON STRATEGY

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*This issue I want to discuss using Field Sales as a strategy for new customer recruitment and large customer penetration.*

### Why Salespeople?

Simple: most business-to-business sales are made via face-to-face sales.

You can get all excited about online sales, mobile sales, social media sales, catalog sales, telephone sales, or any other kind of remote selling, but the plain and simple truth is that about eighty-five to ninety percent of all sales are made in person.

If you want to expand sales, why not look at a sales strategy that makes sense and has been proven across all time? Or, is there a good reason why you keep experimenting with new and unproven sales strategies that may or may not deliver a return on your money?

Take a few minutes and *think* differently about sales and new business. Imagine that there are more customers available to you than you could possibly want. All of those customers are easy to find: they go to work every day at the same location. All you have to do is get in the door and have something they want. These customers are not hiding in cyberspace; it is not a matter of *them* finding *you*; in fact, it is the old, old story of *you* proactively finding *them*: Lead Generation; Problem Solving; Selling; Closing; Repeat.

There is almost zero technology involved in field sales. You generate leads; you follow up and make appointments; you visit, listen, offer, overcome objections and close; and just do it over and over. If you are really good at it, you make a lot of sales, a lot of money, and you are self-supporting on the corporate overhead side of the business.

Do the math. If you allow fifteen percent for cost of sales, \$1 million in sales costs \$150,000. You can divide that up any way you choose: SEO, telemarketing, catalogs, whatever. Why not pay a salesperson \$80,000 a year and spend \$70,000 in lead generation and sales support? Think of what you gain over any other sales channel: one-on-one relationships. People buy from people they like.

Now, think about this: It is just possible that the most efficient sales strategy of all is field sales. When the sales people are highly skilled, the ratio of sales to cost of sales

drops dramatically. You can spend more money on lead generation to feed the effective and efficient sales team, resulting in more sales and more earnings. You are—once again—pushing sales instead of pulling sales.

Yes, it takes support. There are cars, hotels, expenses, etc. But, once the true sales pros have been identified and their basics covered, the increased sales volume and net profit rapidly accelerate and overcome the added costs resulting in a highly cost-effective sales channel.

Plus, you already have mastered all of the basic strategies necessary to generate leads: direct mail, telemarketing, and online. Why not convert those channels—now being used to produce only ten percent of all commercial sales—to partial lead generation tactics allowing you to go after the *ninety percent of sales* you are not getting?

Segmentation of lists (rental and house) can quickly identify businesses with employee size and sales at the level that indicate potential field sales would be effective. If your marketing has been targeting business with fewer than twenty employees for direct sales strategies, why not segment available lists and add businesses with fifty to two-hundred employees and develop effective lead generation materials to mine that segment to continuously feed a hungry sales force?

And, while you may be getting small catalog or online sales from larger organizations now, you also may be losing the really big sales in those companies due to formal bidding, contract sales, and the attention given by a dedicated account manager. Why should you be content with the “little stuff” when you can also be getting the “big stuff?” You shouldn’t.

What have you got to lose? Let’s say you are a classic direct marketing business-to-business company and have been doing \$15 million from your five percent portion of the national remote sales slice totalling ten percent of overall sales in your niche. That would be \$15 million in widgets out of \$300 million sold in all of direct marketing. That means there is another \$290 *billion* worth of widgets being sold by field sales. If you could field an effective, professional sales force and take just one-quarter of one percent of that available business, you could add \$7,250,000 to your top line—almost fifty percent! And, if you could take one-half of one percent of the available business, you would almost *double your existing sales*. Try that with social media, affiliates, or paid search.

Where are you going to find potential like this in the markets of today? Simple answer: Nowhere else.

Where are you going to find a new sales channel that is simple, easy to adopt and relatively easy to manage without more third parties in your pockets and irritating “technology” partners like Google? Simple answer: Nowhere else.

Where are you going to find a new sales channel that isn't smoke and mirrors and dependant upon how the metrics are measured and by whom? Simple answer: Nowhere else.

Where are you going to find a new sales channel that isn't cloaked in YaDaYaDa B.S. by Next Shiny Thing providers who only know how to sell shiny things? Simple answer: Nowhere else.

Field sales are straightforward: either sales people sell or they don't sell; it's an "in" or "out" game. It is instantly measurable without any ambiguity. It is not a terribly complex strategy; it is a *management* strategy, not a *technological* or even a "multichannel" strategy. And, it is almost entirely dependent upon three *controllable* elements: 1) lead generation; 2) sales skills; 3) effective, stringent management.

And the best part of this selling strategy is that you already are a Master of the required front-end: direct marketing. All you have to do is ramp up classic direct marketing to identify and produce leads and you will have built the gateway to another business perhaps bigger and more profitable than the one you are presently running. There is nothing bizarre to learn; nothing unproven; nothing that can't be measured. You already have endless mailing lists to use in lead generation, as well as email and telemarketing lists. You can be up and running in a few weeks, *and* you won't need a new operating system, Endeca, landing pages or Coremetrics. You'll need a phone. What's not to like?

In the end, you have to answer one simple strategic question:

*Are you in the business of making profitable sales,  
or are you in the business of making technology channels?*



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